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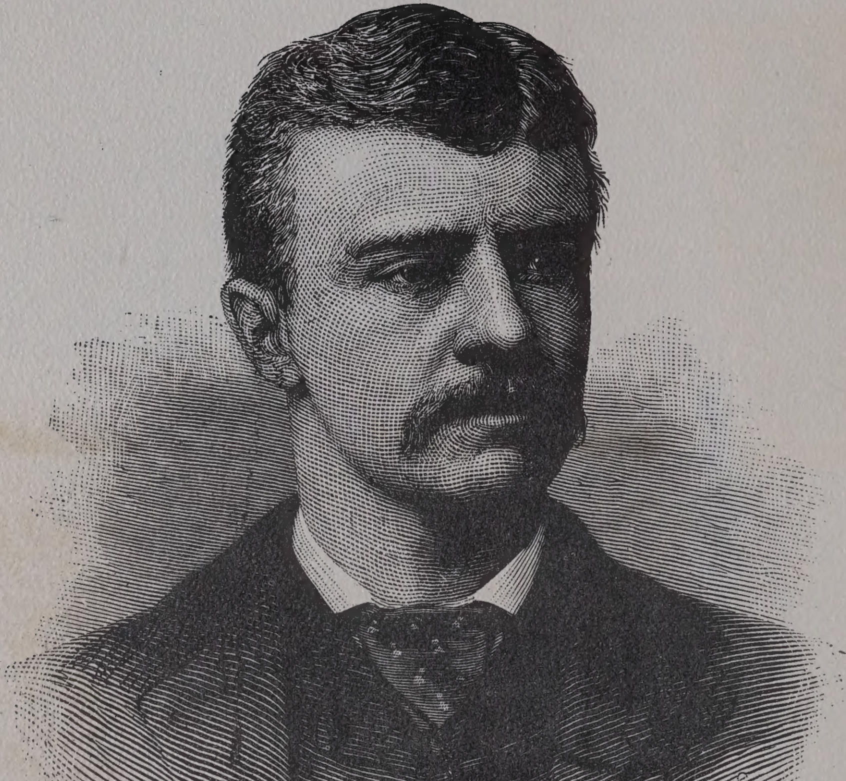

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

THE NORTHWEST TERRITORY
1787-1790

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

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One of a historical series, this pamphlet is published under the direction of the governing Boards of the Public Library of Fort Wayne and Allen County.

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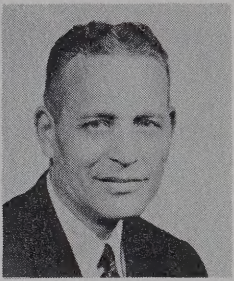
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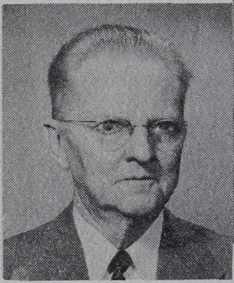
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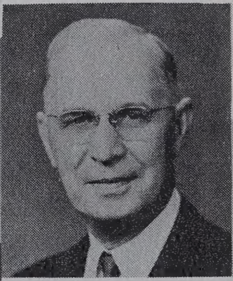
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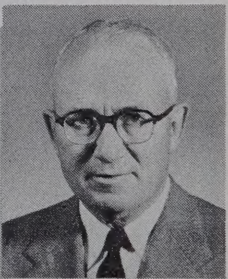
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FOREWORD

In 1787 Congress enacted the ordinance establishing "the Territory Northwest of the River Ohio." The document outlined the government framework of the area, provided for future division into states, and facilitated the western flow of settlers. The ensuing years witnessed frequent American-Indian conferences, broken treaties, ill-fated campaigns against the red men, and cruel retribution by the savages.

The following publication, delineating the early history and colorful personalities of the region, originally appeared as chapters I-II in the fifth volume of the Dakota edition of Theodore Roosevelt's WINNING OF THE WEST. G. P. Putnam's Sons published the work in 1896. Investigation by William T. White of Fort Wayne revealed that the copyright had expired; this reprint resulted. The Carnegie Institution of Washington has graciously granted permission to include the two maps, which are sketched from plates in C. O. Paullin's ATLAS OF THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE UNITED STATES.

Theodore Roosevelt was born in New York City on October 27, 1858. He studied at Harvard University, where, it is believed, he wrote the major portion of his WINNING OF THE WEST. Roosevelt served as a member of the New York state legislature (1882-84), as a member of the U. S. Civil Service Commission (1889-95), and as U. S. assistant secretary of the navy (1897-98). In 1898 he organized the first volunteer cavalry regiment, popularly known as Roosevelt's Rough Riders, and led it as colonel in Cuba.

After serving as governor of New York (1899, 1900), Roosevelt was elected Vice-President of the United States and succeeded to the Presidency on the death of McKinley (1901). After leaving the White House in 1909, the ex-president led a big-game hunting expedition to East Africa and returned home via Europe. He died January 6, 1919.

A man of prodigious energy and broad interests, Theodore Roosevelt was a prolific writer in spite of his active public life and frequent travels. He authored no less than twenty-one books. His letters were voluminous.

The Boards and the Staff of the Public Library of Fort Wayne and Allen County present this reprint in the hope that it will be interesting and informative to Library patrons.

I

THE NORTHWEST TERRITORY; OHIO, 1787–1790

SO far the work of the backwoodsmen in exploring, conquering, and holding the West had been work undertaken solely on individual initiative. The nation as a whole had not directly shared in it. The frontiersmen who chopped the first trails across the Alleghanies, who earliest wandered through the lonely western lands, and who first built stockaded hamlets on the banks of the Watauga, the Kentucky, and the Cumberland, acted each in consequence of his own restless eagerness for adventure and possible gain. The nation neither encouraged them to undertake the enterprises on which they embarked, nor protected them for the first few years of uncertain foothold in the new-won country. Only the backwoodsmen themselves felt the thirst for exploration of the unknown, the desire to try the untried, which drove them hither and thither through the dim wilderness. The men who controlled the immediate destinies of the confederated commonwealths knew little of what lay in the forest-shrouded country beyond the mountains, until the backwoods explorers of their own motion penetrated its hidden and inmost fastnesses. Singly, or in groups, the daring hunters roved through the vast reaches of sombre woodland and pitched their camps on the banks of rushing rivers, nameless and unknown. In bands of varying size the hunter-settlers followed close behind, and built their cabins and blockhouses here and there in the great forest land. They elected their own military leaders, and waged war on their own account against their Indian foes. They constructed their own governmental systems, on their own motion, without assistance or interference from the parent States, until the settlements were firmly established and the work of civic organization well under way.

Of course, some help was ultimately given by the parent States; and the indirect assistance rendered by the nation had been great. The West could neither have been won nor held by the frontiersmen save for the backing given by the Thirteen States. England and Spain would have made short work of the men whose advance into the lands of their Indian allies they viewed with such jealous hatred, had they not also been forced to deal with the generals and soldiers of the Continental army and the statesmen and diplomats of the Continental Congress. But the real work was done by the settlers themselves. The distinguishing feature in the exploration, settlement, and up-building of Kentucky and Tennessee was the individual initiative of the backwoodsmen.

The direct reverse of this was true of the settlement of the country northwest of the Ohio. Here, also, the enterprise, daring, and energy of the individual settlers were of the utmost consequence; the land could never have been won had not the incomers possessed these qualities in a very high degree. But the settlements sprang directly from the action of the Federal Government, and the first and most important of them would not have been undertaken save for that action. The settlers were not the first comers in the wilderness they cleared and tilled. They did not themselves form the armies which met and overthrew the Indians. The regular forces led the way in the country north of the Ohio. The Federal forts were built first; it was only afterwards that the small towns sprang up in their shadow. The Federal troops formed the vanguard of the white advance. They were the mainstay of the force behind which, as behind a shield, the founders of the commonwealths did their work.

Unquestionably many of the settlers did their full share in the fighting; and they and their descendants, on many a stricken field, and through many a long campaign, proved that no people stood above them in hardihood and courage; but the land on which they settled was won less by themselves than by the statesmen who met in the national capital, and the scarred soldiers who on the frontier upbore the national colors. Moreover, instead of being absolutely free to choose their own form of government and shape their own laws and social conditions untrammelled by restrictions, the Northwesterners were allowed to take the land only upon certain definite conditions. The National Government ceded to settlers part of its own domain, and provided the terms upon which States of the Union should afterwards be made out of this domain; and with a wisdom and love of righteousness which have been of incalculable consequence to the whole nation, it stipulated that slavery should never exist in the States thus formed. This condition alone profoundly affected the whole development of the Northwest, and sundered it by a sharp line from those portions of the new country which, for their own ill fortune, were left free from all restriction of the kind. The Northwest owes its life and owes its abounding strength and vigorous growth to the action of the nation as a whole. It was founded not by individual Americans, but by the United States of America. The mighty and populous commonwealths that lie north of the Ohio and in the valley of the upper Mississippi are in a peculiar sense the children of the National Government, and it is no mere accident that has made them in return the especial guardians and protectors of that government; for they form the heart of the nation.

Before the Continental Congress took definite action concerning the Northwest, there had been settlements within its borders, but these settlements were unauthorized and illegal, and had little or no effect upon the aftergrowth of the region. Wild and lawless adventurers had built cabins and made tomahawk claims on the west bank of the upper Ohio. They lived in angry terror of the Indians, and they also had cause to dread the regular army; for wherever the troops discovered their cabins, they tore them down, destroyed the improvements, and drove off the sullen and threatening squatters. As the tide of settlement increased in the neighboring country these trespassers on the Indian lands and on the national domain became more numerous. Many were driven off, again and again; but here and there one kept his foothold. It was these scattered few successful ones who were the first permanent settlers in the present State of Ohio, coming in about the same time that the forts of the regular troops were built. They formed no organized society, and their presence was of no importance whatever in the history of the State.

The American settlers who had come in round the French villages on the Wabash and the Illinois were of more consequence. In 1787, the adult males among these American settlers numbered 240, as against 1040 French of the same class.[1] They had followed in the track of Clark's victorious march. They had taken up land, sometimes as mere squatters, sometimes under color of title obtained from the French courts which Clark and Todd had organized under what they conceived to be the authority of Virginia. They were for the most part rough, enterprising men; and while some of them behaved well, others proved very disorderly and gave much trouble to the French; so that both the creoles and the Indians became exasperated with them and put them in serious jeopardy just before Clark undertook his expedition in the fall of 1786.

The creoles had suffered much from the general misrule and anarchy in their country, and from the disorderly conduct of some of the American

[1] State Department MSS., No. 48, p. 165. Of adult males there were among the French 520 at Vincennes, 191 at Kaskaskia, 239 at Cahokia, 11 at St. Philippe, and 78 at Prairie du Rocher. The American adult males numbered 103 at Vincennes and 137 in the Illinois.

settlers, and of not a few of the ragged volunteer soldiery as well. They hailed with sincere joy the advent of the disciplined Continental troops, commanded by officers who behaved with rigid justice towards all men and put down disorder with a strong hand. They were much relieved to find themselves under the authority of Congress, and both to that body and to the local regular army officers they sent petitions setting forth their grievances and hopes. In one petition to Congress they recited at length the wrongs done them, dwelling especially upon the fact that they had gladly furnished the garrison established among them with peltries and provisions of every kind, for which they had never received a dollar's payment. They remarked that the stores seemed to disappear in a way truly marvellous, leaving the backwoods soldiers who were to have benefited by them "as ragged as ever." The petitioners complained that the undisciplined militia quartered among them, who on their arrival were "in the most shabby and wretched state," and who had "rioted in abundance and unaccustomed luxury" at the expense of the creoles, had also maltreated and insulted them; as, for instance, they had at times wantonly shot the cattle merely to try their rifles. "Ours was the task of hewing and carting them firewood to the barracks," continued the petition, complaining of the way the Virginians had imposed on the submissiveness and docility of the inhabitants, "ours the drudgery of raising vegetables which we did not eat, poultry for their kitchen, cattle for the diversion of their marksmen."

The petitioners further asked that every man among them should be granted five hundred acres. They explained that formerly they had set no value on the land, occupying themselves chiefly with the Indian trade, and raising only the crops they absolutely needed for food; but that now they realized the worth of the soil, and inasmuch as they had various titles to it, under lost or forgotten charters from the French kings, they would surrender all the rights these titles conveyed, save only what belonged to the church of Cahokia, in return for the above-named grant of five hundred acres to each individual.[1]

The memorialists alluded to their explanation of the fact that they had lost all the title-deeds to the land, that is all the old charters granted them, as "ingenious and candid"; and so it was.

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[1] State Department MSS., No. 48. "Memorial of the French Inhabitants of Post Vincennes, Kaskaskia, La Prairie du Rocher, Cahokia, and Village of St. Philip to Congress." By Bartholomew Tardiveau, agent. New York, February 26, 1788. Tardiveau was a French mercantile adventurer, who had relations with Gardoqui and the Kentucky separatists, and in a petition presented by him it is not easy to discriminate between the views that are really those of the creoles, and the views which he deemed it for his own advantage to have expressed.

The immense importance of having lost all proof of their rights did not strike them. There was an almost pathetic childishness in the request that the United States authorities should accept oral tradition in lieu of the testimony of the lost charters, and in the way they dwelt with a kind of humble pride upon their own "submissiveness and docility." In the same spirit, the inhabitants of Vincennes surrendered their charter, remarking "accustomed to mediocrity, we do not wish for wealth but for mere competency."[1] Of course, the "submissiveness" and the lightheartedness of the French did not prevent their being also fickle; and their "docility" was varied by fits of violent quarrelling with their American neighbors and among themselves. But the quarrels of the creoles were those of children, compared with the ferocious feuds of the Americans.

Sometimes the trouble was of a religious nature. The priest at Vincennes, for instance, bitterly assailed the priest at Cahokia, because he married a Catholic to a Protestant; while all the people of the Cahokia church stoutly supported their pastor in what he had done.[2] This Catholic priest was Clark's old friend, Gibault. He was suffering from poverty, due to his loyal friendship to the Americans; for he had advanced Clark's troops both goods and peltries, for which he had never received payment. In a petition to Congress, he showed how this failure to repay him had reduced him to want, and had forced him to sell his two slaves, who otherwise would have kept and tended him in his old age.[1]

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[1] State Department MSS., No. 48, July 26, 1787.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 85.

The Federal General, Harmar, in the fall of 1787, took formal possession, in person, of Vincennes and the Illinois towns; and he commented upon the good behavior of the creoles and their respect for the United States Government, and laid stress upon the fact that they were entirely unacquainted with what the Americans called liberty, and could best be governed in the manner to which they were accustomed—"by a commandant with a few troops."[2]

The American pioneers, on the contrary, were of all people the least suited to be governed by a commandant with troops. They were much better stuff out of which to make a free, self-governing nation, and they were much better able to hold their own in the world and to shape their own destiny; but they were far less pleasant people to govern. To this day the very virtues of the pioneers—not to speak of their faults—make

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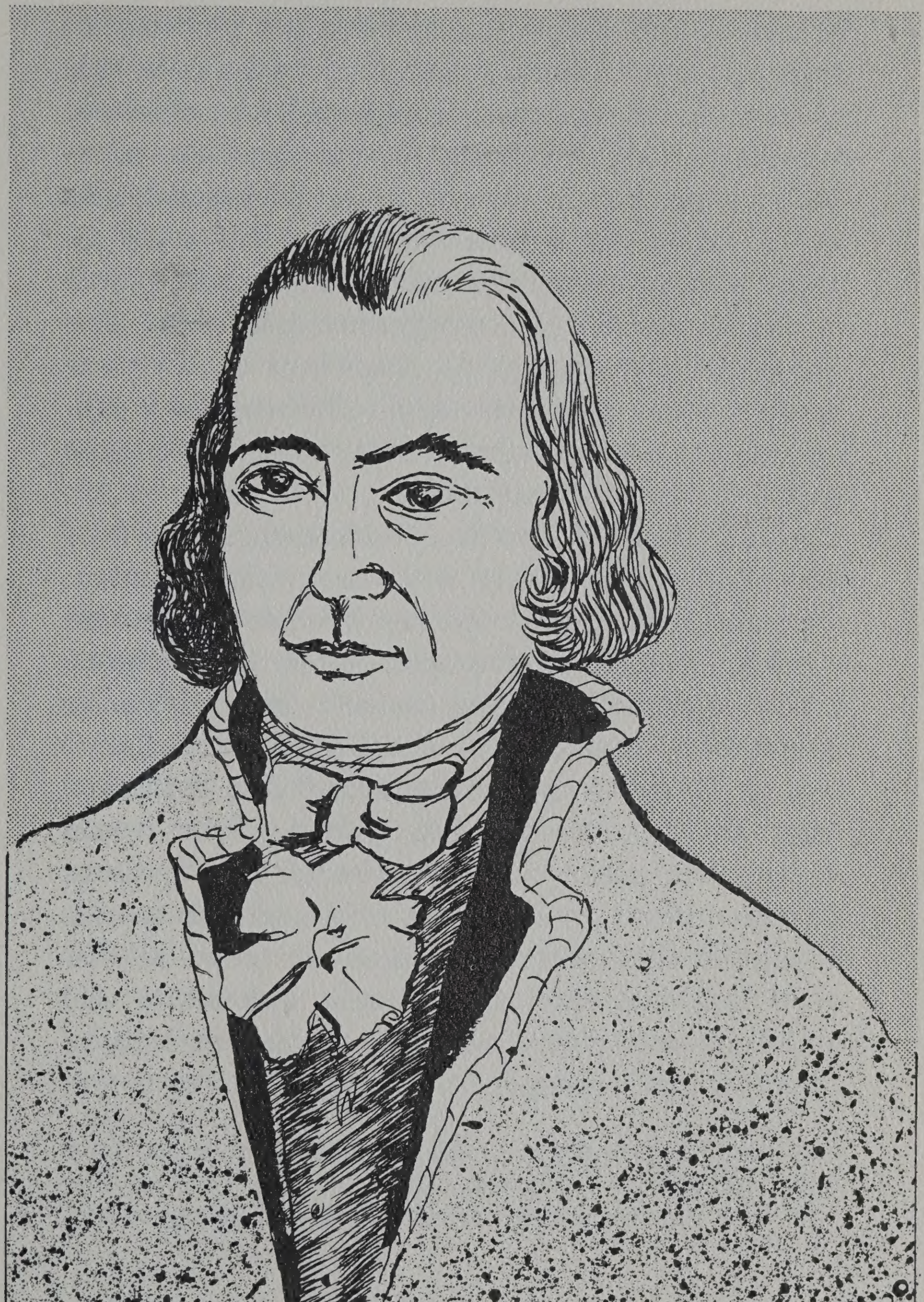
[1] *American State Papers*, Public Lands, i., Gibault's "Memorial," May 1, 1790.

[2] *St. Clair Papers*, Harmar's Letters, August 7 and November 24, 1787.



General Josiah Harmar

it almost impossible for them to get on with an ordinary army officer, accustomed as he is to rule absolutely, though justly and with a sort of severe kindness. Army officers on the frontier—especially when put in charge of Indian reservations or of French or Spanish communities—have almost always been more or less at swords'-points with the stubborn, cross-grained pioneers. The borderers are usually as suspicious as they are independent, and their self-sufficiency and self-reliance often degenerate into mere lawlessness and defiance of all restraint.

The Federal officers in the backwoods north of the Ohio got on badly with the backwoodsmen. Harmar took the side of the French creoles and warmly denounced the acts of the frontiersmen who had come in among them.[1] In his letter to the creoles he alluded to Clark's Vincennes garrison as "a set of lawless banditti," and explained that his own troops were regulars, who would treat with justice both the French and Indians. Harmar never made much effort to conceal his dislike of the borderers. In one letter he alludes to a Delaware chief as "a manly old fellow, and much more of a gentleman than the generality of these frontier people."[2] Naturally, there was little love lost between the bitterly prejudiced old army officer, fixed and rigid in all his ideas, and the equally prejudiced backwoodsmen, whose ways of looking at almost all questions were antipodal to his.

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[1] State Department MSS., No. 150, vol. ii., Harmar to Legrace and Busseron, June 29, 1787.

[2] *Ibid.*, Harmar to the Secretary of War, March 9, 1788.

The creoles of the Illinois and Vincennes sent warm letters of welcome to Harmar. The American settlers addressed him in an equally respectful but very different tone, for, they said, their hearts were filled with "anxiety, gloominess, and dismay." They explained the alarm they felt at the report that they were to be driven out of the country, and protested—what was doubtless true—that they had settled on the land in entire good faith and with the assent of the French inhabitants. The latter themselves bore testimony to the good faith and good behavior of many of the settlers, and petitioned that these should not be molested,[1] explaining that the French had been benefited by their industry, and had preserved a peaceable and friendly intercourse with them. In the end, while the French villagers were left undisturbed in their ancient privileges, and while they were granted or were confirmed in the possession of the land immediately around them, the

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[1] State Department MSS. 150: Address of American Inhabitants of Vincennes, August 4, 1787; Recommendation by French Inhabitants in Favor of American Inhabitants, August 2d; letter of Le Chamy and others, Kaskaskia, August 25th; letter of J. M. P. Legrace, June 25th.

Americans and the French who chose to go outside the village grants were given merely the rights of other settlers.

The Continental officers exchanged courtesies with the Spanish commandants of the creole villages on the west bank of the Mississippi, but kept a sharp eye on them, as these commandants endeavored to persuade all the French inhabitants to move west of the river by offering them free grants of land.

But all these matters were really of small consequence. The woes of the creoles, the trials of the American squatters, the friction between the regular officers and the backwoodsmen, and jealousy felt by both for the Spaniards—all these were of little real moment at this period of the history of the Northwest. The vital point in its history was the passage by Congress of the Ordinance of 1787, and the doings of the various land companies under and in consequence of this ordinance.

The wide gap between the ways in which the Northwest and Southwest were settled is made plain by such a statement. In the Northwest it was the action of Congress, the action of the representatives of the nation acting as a whole, which was all-important. In the Southwest no action of Congress was of any importance when compared with the voluntary movements of the

[1] Hamtranck to Harmar, October 13, 1788.

backwoodsmen themselves. In the Northwest it was the nation which acted. In the Southwest the determining factor was the individual initiative of the pioneers. The most striking feature in the settlement of the Southwest was the free play given to the workings of extreme individualism. The settlement of the Northwest represented the triumph of an intelligent collectivism, which yet allowed to each man a full measure of personal liberty.

Another difference of note was the difference in stock of the settlers. The Southwest was settled by the true backwoodsmen, the men who lived on their small clearings among the mountains of western Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina. The first settlement in Ohio, the settlement which had most effect upon the history of the Northwest and which largely gave it its peculiar trend, was the work of New Englanders. There was already a considerable population in New England; but the rugged farmers with their swarming families had to fill up large waste spaces in Maine and in northern New Hampshire and Vermont, and there was a very marked movement among them towards New York, and especially into the Mohawk valley, all west of which was yet a wilderness. In consequence, during the years immediately succeeding the close of the Revolutionary War, the New England emigrants made their homes in those stretches of wilderness which were nearby, and did not appear on the western border. But there had always been enterprising individuals among them desirous of seeking a more fertile soil in the far West or South, and even before the Revolution some of these men ventured to Louisiana itself to pick out a good country in which to form a colony. After the close of the war the fame of the lands along the Ohio was spread abroad; and the men who wished to form companies for the purposes of adventurous settlement began to turn their eyes thither.

The first question to decide was the ownership of the wished-for country. This decision had to be made in Congress by agreement among the representatives of the different States. Seven States—Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Virginia, Georgia, and both Carolinas—claimed portions of the western lands. New York's claim was based with entire solemnity on the ground that she was the heir of the Iroquois tribes, and therefore inherited all the wide regions overrun by their terrible war bands. The other six States based their claims on various charters, which in reality conferred rights not one whit more substantial.

These different claims were not of a kind to which any outside power would have paid heed. Their usefulness came in when the States bargained among themselves. In the bargaining, both among the claimant States and between the claimant and the non-claimant States, the charter titles were treated as of importance, and substantial concessions were exacted in return for their surrender. But their value was really inchoate until the land was reduced to possession by some act of the States or the nation.

At the close of the Revolutionary War there existed wide differences between the various States as to the actual ownership and possession of the lands they claimed. Virginia and North Carolina were the only two which had reduced to some kind of occupation a large part of the territory to which they asserted title. Their backwoodsmen had settled in the lands so that they already held a certain population. Moreover, these same backwoodsmen, organized as part of the militia of the parent States, had made good their claim by successful warfare. The laws of the two States were executed by State officials in communities scattered over much of the country claimed. The soldier-settlers of Virginia and North Carolina had actually built houses and forts, tilled the soil, and exercised the functions of civil government on the banks of the Wabash and the Ohio, the Mississippi, the Cumberland, and the Tennessee. Counties and districts had been erected by the two States on the western waters; and representatives of the civil divisions thus constituted sat in the State legislatures. The claims of Virginia and North Carolina to much of the territory had behind them the substantial element of armed possession. The settlement and conquest of the lands had been achieved without direct intervention by the Federal Government; though, of course, it was only the ultimate success of the nation in its contest with the foreign foe that gave the settlement and conquest any value.

As much could not be said for the claims of the other States. South Carolina's claim was to a mere ribbon of land south of the North Carolina territory, and need not be considered; it was ceded to the Government about the time the Northwest was organized.[1] Georgia asserted that her boundaries extended due west of the Mississippi and that all between was hers. But the entire western portion of the territory was actually held by the Spaniards and by the Indian tribes tributary to the Spaniards. No subjects of Georgia lived on it, or were allowed to live on it. The few white inhabitants were subjects of the King of Spain, and lived under Spanish law; the Creeks and Choctaws were his subsidized allies, and he held the country by right of conquest.

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[1] For an account of this cession, see Mr. Garrett's excellent paper in the publications of the Tennessee Historical Society.

Georgia, a weak and turbulent, though a growing State, was powerless to enforce her claims. Most of the territory to which she asserted title did not in truth become part of the United States until Pinckney's treaty went into effect. It was the United States and not Georgia that actually won and held the land in dispute; and it was a discredit to Georgia's patriotism that she so long wrangled about it, and ultimately drove so hard a bargain concerning it with the National Government.

There was a similar state of affairs in the far Northwest. No New Yorkers lived in the region bounded by the shadowy and wavering lines of the Iroquois conquests. The lands claimed under ancient charters by Massachusetts and Connecticut were occupied by the British and their Indian allies, who held adverse possession. Not a single New England settler lived in them; no New England law had any force in them; no New England soldier had gone or could go thither. They were won by the victory of Wayne and the treaty of Jay. If Massachusetts and Connecticut had stood alone, the lands would never have been yielded to them at all; they could not have enforced their claim, and it would have been scornfully disregarded. The region was won for the United States by the arms and diplomacy of the United States. Whatever of reality there was in the titles of Massachusetts and Connecticut came from the existence and actions of the Federal Union.[1]

All the States that did not claim lands beyond the mountains were strenuous in belittling the claims of those that did, and insisted that the title to the western territory should be vested in the Union. Not even the danger from the British armies could keep this question in abeyance, and while the war was at its height the States were engaged in bitter wrangles over the subject; for the weakness of the Federal tie rendered it always probable that the different members of the Union would sulk or quarrel with one another rather than oppose an energetic resistance to the foreign foe. At different times different non-claimant States took the lead in pushing the various schemes for nationalizing the western lands; but Maryland was the first to take action in this direction, and was the most determined in pressing the matter to a successful issue. She showed the greatest hesitation in joining the Confederation at all while the matter was allowed to rest unsettled; and insisted that the titles of the claimant States were void, that there was no need of asking them to cede what they did not possess, and that the West should be declared outright to be part of the Federal domain.

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[1] For this northwestern history, see *The Life, Journal, and Correspondence of Manasseh Cutler*, by William Parker Cutler and Julia Perkins Cutler; *The St. Clair Papers*, by W. H. Smith; *The Old Northwest*, by B. A. Hinsdale; *Maryland's Influence upon Land Cessions*, by Herbert Adams. See also Donaldson's *Public Domain*, Hildreth's *History of Washington County*, and the various articles by Poole and others. In Professor Hinsdale's excellent book, on p. 200, is a map of the "Territory of the Thirteen Original States in 1783." This map is accurate enough for Virginia and North Carolina; but the lands in the west put down as belonging to Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Georgia, did not really belong to them at all in 1783; they were held by the British and Spaniards, and were ultimately surrendered to the United States, not to individual States. These States did not surrender the land; they merely surrendered a disputed title to the lands.

Maryland was largely actuated by fear of her neighbor Virginia. Virginia's claims were the most considerable, and if they had all been allowed hers would have been indeed an empire. Maryland's fears were twofold. She dreaded the mere growth of Virginia in wealth, power, and population in the first place; and in the second she feared lest her own population might be drained into these vacant lands, thereby at once diminishing her own, and building up her neighbor's, importance. Each State, at that time, had to look upon its neighbors as probable commercial rivals and possible armed enemies. This is a feeling which we now find difficulty in understanding. At present no State in the Union fears the growth of a neighbor, or would ever dream of trying to check that growth. The direct reverse was the case during and after the Revolution; for the jealousy and distrust which the different States felt for one another were bitter to a degree.

The Continental Congress was more than once at its wits' ends in striving to prevent an open break over the land question between the more extreme States on the two sides. The wisest and coolest leaders saw that the matter could never be determined on a mere consideration of the abstract rights, or even of the equities, of the case. They saw that it would have to be decided, as almost all political questions of great importance must be decided, by compromise and concession. The foremost statesmen of the Revolution were eminently practical politicians. They had high ideals and they strove to realize them, as near as might be; otherwise they would have been neither patriots nor statesmen. But they were not theorists. They were men of affairs, accustomed to deal with other men; and they understood that few questions of real moment can be decided on their merits alone. Such questions must be dealt with on the principle of getting the greatest possible amount of ultimate good, and of surrendering in return whatever must be surrendered in order to attain this good. There was no use in learned arguments to show that Maryland's position was the proper one for a far-sighted American patriot, or that Virginia and North Carolina had more basis for their claims than Connecticut or Georgia. What had to be done was to appeal to the love of country and shrewd common-sense of the people in the different States, and persuade them each to surrender on certain points, so that all could come to a common agreement.

New York's claim was the least defensible of all, but, on the other hand, New York led the way in vesting whatever title she might have in the Federal Government. In 1780, she gave proof of the growth of the national idea among her citizens by abandoning all her claim to western lands in favor of the Union. Congress used this surrender as an argument by which to move the other States to action. It issued an earnest appeal to them to follow New York's example without regard to the value of their titles, so that the Federal Union might be put on a firm basis. Congress did not discuss its own rights, nor the rights of the States; it simply asked that the cessions be made as a matter of expediency and patriotism; and announced that the policy of the Government would be to divide this new territory into districts of suitable size, which should be admitted as States as soon as they became well settled. This last proposition was important, as it outlined the future policy of the Government, which was to admit the new communities as States, with all the rights of the old States, instead of treating them as subordinate and dependent, after the manner of the European colonial systems.

Maryland then joined the Confederation in 1781. Virginia and Connecticut had offered to cede their claims, but under such conditions that it was impossible to close with the offers. Congress accepted the New York cession gratefully, with an eye to the effect on the other States; but for some time no progress was made in the negotiations with the latter. Finally, early in 1784, the bargain with Virginia was consummated. She ceded to Congress her rights to the territory northwest of the Ohio, except a certain amount retained as a military reserve for the use of her soldiers, while Congress tacitly agreed not to question her right to Kentucky. A year later Massachusetts followed suit, and ceded to Congress her title to all the lands lying west of the present western boundary of New York State. Finally, in 1786, a similar cession was made by Connecticut. But Connecticut's action was not much more patriotic or less selfish than Georgia's. Throughout the controversy she showed a keen desire to extract from Congress all that could possibly be obtained, and to delay action as long as might be; though, like Georgia, Connecticut could by right claim nothing that was not in reality obtained for the Union by the Union itself. She made her grant conditionally upon being allowed to reserve for her own profit about five thousand square miles in what is now northern Ohio. This tract was afterwards known as the Western Reserve. Congress was very reluctant to accept such a cession, with its greedy offset, but there was no wise alternative and the bargain was finally struck.

The non-claimant States had attained their object, and yet it had been obtained in a manner that left the claimant States satisfied. The project for which Maryland had contended was realized, with the difference that Congress accepted the Northwest as a gift coupled with conditions, instead of taking it as an unconditional right. The lands became part of the Federal domain, and were nationalized so far as they could be under the Confederation; but there was no national treasury into which to turn the proceeds from the sale until the Constitution was adopted.[1]

Having got possession of the land, Congress proceeded to arrange for its disposition, even before providing the outline of the governmental system for the States that might grow up therein. Congress regarded the territory as forming a treasury chest, and was anxious to sell the land in lots, whether to individuals or to companies. In 1785, it passed an ordinance of singular wis-

[1] Hinsdale, 250.

dom, which has been the basis of all our subsequent legislation on the subject.

This ordinance was another proof of the way in which the nation applied its collective power to the subdual and government of the Northwest, instead of leaving the whole matter to the working of unrestricted individualism, as in the Southwest. The pernicious system of acquiring title to public lands in vogue among the Virginians and North Carolinians was abandoned. Instead of making each man survey his own land and allowing him to survey it when, how, and where he pleased, with the certainty of producing endless litigation and trouble, Congress provided for a corps of government surveyors, who were to go about this work systematically. It provided further for a known base line, and then for division of the country into ranges of townships six miles square, and for the subdivision of these townships into lots ("sections") of one square mile—six hundred and forty acres—each. The ranges, townships, and sections were duly numbered. The basis for the whole system of public education in the Northwest was laid by providing that in every township lot No. 16 should be reserved for the maintenance of public schools therein. A minimum price of a dollar an acre was put on the land.

Congress hoped to find in these western lands a source of great wealth. The hope was disappointed. The task of subduing the wilderness is not very remunerative. It yields a little more than a livelihood to men of energy, resolution, and bodily strength and address; but it does not yield enough for men to be able to pay heavily for the privilege of undertaking the labor. Throughout our history the pioneer has found that by taking up wild land at a low cost he can make a rough living, and keep his family fed, clothed, and housed; but it is only by very hard work that he can lay anything by or materially better his condition. Of course, the few very successful do much more, and the unsuccessful do even less; but the average pioneer can just manage to keep continually forging a little ahead in matters material and financial. Under such conditions a high price cannot be obtained for public lands; and when they are sold, as they must be, at a low price, the receipts do little more than offset the necessary outlay. The truth is, that people have a very misty idea as to the worth of wild lands. Even when the soil is rich they only possess the capacity of acquiring value under labor. All their value arises from the labor done on them or in their neighborhood, except that it depends also upon the amount of labor which must necessarily be expended in transportation.

It is the fashion to speak of the immense opportunity offered to any race by a virgin continent. In one sense the opportunity is indeed great; but in another sense it is not, for the chance of failure is very great also. It is an opportunity of which advantage can be taken only at the cost of much hardship and much grinding toil.

It remained for Congress to determine the conditions under which the settlers could enter the new land, and under which new States should spring up therein. These conditions were fixed by the famous Ordinance of 1787; one of the two or three most important acts ever passed by an American legislative body, for it determined that the new northwestern States—the children, and the ultimate leaders, of the Union—should get their growth as free commonwealths, untainted by the horrible curse of negro slavery.

Several ordinances for the government of the Northwest were introduced and carried through Congress in 1784–1786, but they were never put into operation. In 1784, Jefferson put into his draft of the ordinance of that year a clause prohibiting slavery in all the western territory, south as well as north of the Ohio River, after the beginning of the year 1801. This clause was struck out; and even if adopted it would probably have amounted to nothing, for if slavery had been permitted to take firm root it could hardly have been torn up. In 1785, Rufus King advanced a proposition to prohibit all slavery in the Northwest immediately, but Congress never acted on the proposal.

The next movement in the same direction was successful, because when it was made it was pushed by a body of well-known men who were anxious to buy the lands that Congress was anxious to sell, but who would not buy them until they had some assurance that the governmental system under which they were to live would meet their ideas. This body was composed of New Englanders, mostly veterans of the Revolutionary War, and led by officers who had stood well in the Continental army.

When, in the fall of 1783, the Continental army was disbanded, the war-worn and victorious soldiers, who had at last wrung victory from the reluctant years of defeat, found themselves fronting grim penury. Some were worn with wounds and sickness; all were poor and unpaid; and Congress had no means to pay them. Many among them felt that they had small chance to repair their broken fortunes if they returned to the homes they had abandoned seven weary years before, when the guns of the minute-men first called them to battle.

These heroes of the blue and buff turned their eyes westward to the fertile lands lying beyond the mountains. They petitioned Congress to mark out a territory, in what is now the State of Ohio, as the seat of a distinct colony, in time to become one of the confederated States; and they asked that their bounty lands should be set off for them in this territory. Two hundred and eighty-five officers of the Continental line joined in this petition; one hundred and fifty-five, over half, were from Massachusetts, the State which had furnished more troops than any other to the Revolutionary armies. The remainder were from Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Maryland.

The signers of this petition desired to change the paper obligations of Congress, which they held, into fertile wild lands which they should themselves subdue by their labor; and out of these wild lands they proposed to make a new State. These two germ ideas remained in their minds, even though their petition bore no fruit. They kept before their eyes the plan of a company to undertake the work, after getting the proper cession from Congress. Finally, in the early spring of 1786, some of the New England officers met at the "Bunch of Grapes" tavern in Boston and organized the Ohio Company of Associates. They at once sent one of their number as a delegate to New York, where the Continental Congress was in session, to lay their memorial before that body.

Congress was considering another ordinance for the government of the Northwest when the memorial was presented, and the former was delayed until the latter could be considered by the committee to which it had been referred. In July, Dr. Manasseh Cutler, of Ipswich, Massachusetts, arrived as a second delegate to look after the interests of the company. He and they were as much concerned in the terms of the governmental ordinance as in the conditions on which the land grant was to be made. The orderly, liberty-loving, keen-minded New Englanders who formed the company, would not go to a land where the form of government was hostile to their ideas of righteousness and sound public policy.

The one point of difficulty was the slavery question. Only eight States were at the time represented in the Congress; these were Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia — thus five of the eight States were southern. But the Federal Congress rose in this, almost its last act, to a lofty pitch of patriotism; and the Southern States showed a marked absence of sectional feeling in the matter. Indeed, Cutler found that though he was a New England man, with a New England company behind him, many of the eastern people looked rather coldly at his scheme, fearing lest the settlement of the West might mean a rapid drainage of population from the East. Nathan Dane, a Massachusetts delegate, favored it, in part because he hoped that planting such a colony in the West might keep at least that part of it true to "Eastern politics." The southern members, on the other hand, heartily supported the plan. The committee that brought in the ordinance, the majority being southern men, also reported an article prohibiting slavery. Dane was the mover, while the rough draft may have been written by Cutler; and the report was vigorously pushed by the two Virginians on the committee, William Grayson and Richard Henry Lee. The article was adopted by a vote unanimous, except for the dissent of one delegate, a nobody from New York.

The ordinance established a territorial government, with a governor, secretary, and judges. A General Assembly was authorized as soon as there should be five thousand free male inhabitants in the district. The lower house was elective, the upper house, or council, was appointive. The Legislature was to elect a territorial delegate to Congress. The governor was required to own a freehold of one thousand acres in the district, a judge five hundred, and a representative two hundred; and no man was allowed to vote unless he possessed a freehold of fifty acres.[1] These provisions would seem strangely undemocratic if applied to a similar territory in our own day.

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[1] *St. Clair Papers*, ii., 603.

The all-important features of the ordinance were contained in the six articles of compact between the confederated States and the people and states of the territory, to be forever unalterable, save by the consent of both parties. The first guaranteed complete freedom of worship and religious belief to all peaceable and orderly persons. The second provided for trial by jury, the writ of habeas corpus, the privileges of the common law, and the right of proportional legislative representation. The third enjoined that faith should be kept with the Indians, and provided that "schools and the means of education" should forever be encouraged, inasmuch as "religion, morality, and knowledge" were necessary to good government. The fourth ordained that the new States formed in the Northwest should forever form part of the United States and be subject to the laws as were the others. The fifth provided for the formation and admission of not less than three or more than five states, formed out of this northwestern territory, whenever such a putative state should contain sixty thousand inhabitants; the form of government to be republican, and the state, when created, to stand on an equal footing with all the other States.

The sixth and most important article declared that there should never be slavery or involuntary servitude in the Northwest, otherwise than for the punishment of convicted criminals, provided, however, that fugitive slaves from the older States might lawfully be reclaimed by their owners. This was the greatest blow struck for freedom and against slavery in all our history, save only Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, for it determined that in the final struggle the mighty West should side with the right against the wrong. It was in its results a deadly stroke against the traffic in, and ownership of, human beings, and the blow was dealt by southern men, to whom all honor should ever be given.

This anti-slavery compact was the most important feature of the ordinance, yet there were many other features only less important.

In truth, the Ordinance of 1787 was so wide-reaching in its effects, was drawn in accordance with so lofty a morality and such far-seeing statesmanship, and was fraught with such weal for the nation, that it will ever rank among the foremost of American state papers, coming in that little group which includes the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, Washington's Farewell Address, and Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and Second Inaugural. It marked out a definite line of orderly freedom along which the new States were to advance. It laid deep the foundation for that system of widespread public education so characteristic of the Republic and so essential to its healthy growth. It provided that complete religious freedom and equality which we now accept as part of the order of nature, but which were then unknown in any important European nation. It guaranteed the civil liberty of all citizens. It provided for an indissoluble Union, a Union which should grow until it could relentlessly crush nullification and secession; for the States founded under it were the creatures of the nation, and were by the compact declared forever inseparable from it.

In one respect the ordinance marked a new departure of the most radical kind. The adoption of the policy therein outlined has worked a complete revolution in the way of looking at new communities formed by colonization from the parent country. Yet the very completeness of this revolution to a certain extent veils from us its importance. We cannot realize the greatness of the change because of the fact that the change was so great; for we cannot now put ourselves in the mental attitude which regarded the old course as natural. The Ordinance of 1787 decreed that the new States should stand in every respect on an equal footing with the old; and yet should be individually bound together with them. This was something entirely new in the history of colonization. Hitherto every new colony had either been subject to the parent State, or independent of it. England, Holland, France, and Spain, when they founded colonies beyond the sea, founded them for the good of the parent State and governed them as dependencies. The home country might treat her colonies well or ill, she might cherish and guard them, or oppress them with harshness and severity, but she never treated them as equals. Russia, in pushing her obscure and barbarous conquest and colonization of Siberia,—a conquest destined to be of such lasting importance in the history of Asia,—pursued precisely the same course.

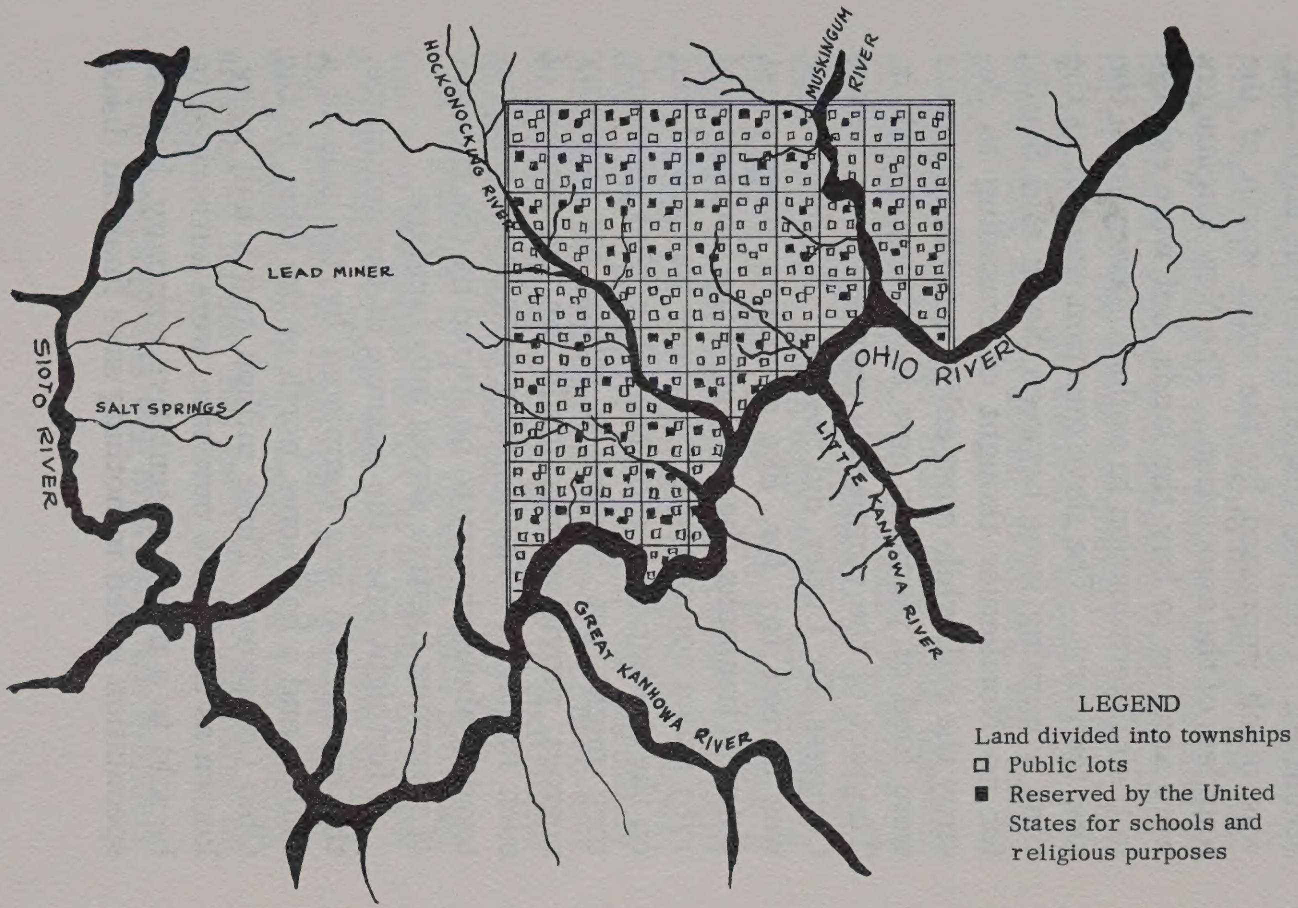
In fact, this had been the only kind of colonization known to modern Europe. In the ancient world it had also been known, and it was only through it that great empires grew. Each Roman colony that settled in Gaul or Iberia founded a city or established a province which was tributary to Rome, instead of standing on a footing of equality in the same nation with Rome. But the other great colonizing peoples of antiquity,—the Greeks and Phœnicians—spread in an entirely different way. Each of their colonies became absolutely independent of the country whence it sprang. Carthage and Syracuse were as free as Tyre or Sidon, as Corinth or Athens. Thus under the Roman method the empire grew, at the cost of the colonies losing their independence. Under the Greek and Carthaginian method the colonies acquired the same freedom that was enjoyed by the mother cities; but there was no extension of empire, no growth of a great and enduring nationality. The modern European nations had followed the Roman system. Until the United States sprang into being every great colonizing people followed one system or the other.

The American Republic, taking advantage of its fortunate federal features and of its strong Central Government, boldly struck out on a new path, which secured the freedom-giving properties of the Greek method, while preserving national union as carefully as it was preserved by the Roman empire. New States were created, which stood on exactly the same footing as the old; and yet these new States formed integral and inseparable parts of a great and rapidly growing nation. This movement was original with the American Republic; she was dealing with new conditions, and on this point the history of England merely taught her what to avoid. The English colonies were subject to the British Crown, and therefore to Great Britain. The new American States, themselves colonies in the old Greek sense, were subject only to a government which they helped administer on equal terms with the old States. No State was subject to another, new or old. All paid a common allegiance to a central power which was identical with none.

The absolute novelty of this feature, as the world then stood, fails to impress us now because we are so used to it. But it was at that time without precedent; and though since then the idea has made rapid progress, there seems in most cases to have been very great difficulty in applying it in practice. The Spanish-American states proved wholly unable to apply it at all. In Australia and South Africa all that can be said is that events now apparently show a trend in the direction of adopting this system. At present all these British colonies, as regards one another, are independent but disunited; as regards the mother country, they remain united with her, but in the condition of dependencies.

The vital feature of the ordinance was the prohibition of slavery. This prohibition was not retroactive; the slaves of the French villagers, and of the few American slaveholders who had already settled round them, were not disturbed in their condition. But all further importation of slaves, and the holding in slavery of any not already slaves, were prohibited. The prohibition was brought about by the action of the Ohio Company. Without the prohibition the company would probably not have undertaken its experiment in colonization; and save for the pressure of

LAND OF THE OHIO COMPANY ABOUT 1787


HOCKONOCKING RIVER
MUSKINGUM RIVER
LEAD MINER
SIOTO RIVER
SALT SPRINGS
OHIO RIVER
LITTLE KANHOWA RIVER
GREAT KANHOWA RIVER
LEGEND
Land divided into townships
□ Public lots
■ Reserved by the United States for schools and religious purposes

A sketch of a map facsimile in ATLAS OF THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE UNITED STATES by permission Carnegie Institution of Washington the company slavery would hardly have been abolished. Congress wished to sell the lands, and was much impressed by the solid worth of the founders of the association. The New Englanders were anxious to buy the lands, but were earnest in their determination to exclude slavery from the new territory. The slave question was not at the time a burning issue between North and South; for no Northerner thought of crusading to destroy the evil, while most enlightened Southerners were fond of planning how to do away with it. The tact of the company's representative before Congress, Dr. Cutler, did the rest. A compromise was agreed to; for, like so many other great political triumphs, the passage of the Ordinance of 1787 was a compromise. Slavery was prohibited on the one hand; and on the other, that the territory might not become a refuge for runaway negroes, provision was made for the return of such fugitives. The popular conscience was yet too dull about slavery to be stirred by the thought of returning fugitive slaves into bondage.

A fortnight after the passage of the ordinance, the transaction was completed by the sale of a million and a half acres, north of the Ohio, to the Ohio Company. Three million and a half more, known as the Scioto purchase, were authorized to be sold to a purely speculative company, but the speculation ended in nothing save financial disaster. The price was nominally seventy cents an acre; but as payment was made in depreciated public securities, the real price was only eight or nine cents an acre. The sale illustrated the tendency of Congress at that time to sell the land in large tracts; a most unwholesome tendency, fruitful of evil to the whole community. It was only by degrees that the wisdom of selling the land in small plots, and to actual occupiers, was recognized.

Together with the many wise and tolerant measures included in the famous Ordinance of 1787, and in the land Ordinance of 1785, there were one or two which represented the feelings of the past, not the future. One of them was a regulation which reserved a lot in every township to be given for the purposes of religion. Nowadays, and rightfully, we regard as peculiarly American the complete severance of Church and State, and refuse to allow the State to contribute in any way towards the support of any sect.

A regulation of a very different kind provided that two townships should be set apart to endow a university. These two townships now endow the University of Ohio, placed in a town which, with queer poverty of imagination and fatuous absence of humor, has been given the name of Athens.

The company was well organized, the founders showing the invaluable New England aptitude for business, and there was no delay in getting the settlement started. After some deliberation the lands lying along the Ohio, on both sides of, but mainly below, the Muskingum, were chosen for the site of the new colony. There was some delay in making the payments subsequent to the first, and only a million and some odd acres were patented. One of the reasons for choosing the mouth of the Muskingum as the site for the town was the neighborhood of Fort Harmar, with its strong Federal garrison, and the spot was but a short distance beyond the line of already existing settlement.

As soon as enough of the would-be settlers were ready, they pushed forward in parties towards the headwaters of the Ohio, struggling along the winter-bound roads of western Pennsylvania. In January and February they began to reach the banks of the Youghiogheny, and set about building boats to launch when the river opened. There were forty-eight settlers in all who started downstream, their leader being General Rufus Putnam. He was a tried and gallant soldier, who had served with honor not only in the Revolutionary armies, but in the war which crushed the French power in America. On April 7, 1788, he stepped from his boat, which he had very appropriately named the *Mayflower*, on to the bank of the Muskingum.

The settlers immediately set to work felling trees, building log-houses and a stockade, clearing fields, and laying out the ground-plan of Marietta; for they christened the new town after the French queen, Marie Antoinette.[1] It was laid out in the untenanted wilderness; yet nearby was the proof that ages ago the wilderness had been tenanted, for close at hand were huge embankments, marking the site of a town of the long-vanished mound-builders. Giant trees grew on the mounds; all vestiges of the builders had vanished, and the solemn forest had closed above every remembrance of their fate.

The day of the landing of these new pilgrims was a day big with fate not only for the Northwest, but for the nation. It marked the beginning of the orderly and national conquest of the lands that now form the heart of the Republic. It marked the advent among the pioneers of a new element, which was to leave the impress of its strong personality deeply graven on the institutions and the people of the great States north of the Ohio—an element which in the end turned their development in the direction towards which the parent stock inclined in its home on the North Atlantic seaboard. The new settlers were almost all soldiers of the Revolutionary armies; they were hard-working, orderly men of trained courage and of keen intellect. An outside observer speaks of them as being the best informed, the most courteous and industrious, and the most law-abiding of all the settlers who had come to the frontier, while their leaders were men of a higher type than was elsewhere to be found in the West.[1] No better material for founding a new State existed anywhere. With such a foundation the State was little likely to plunge into the perilous abysses of anarchic license or of separatism and disunion. Moreover, to plant a settlement of this kind on the edge of the Indian-haunted wilderness showed that the founders possessed both hardihood and resolution.

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[1] *St. Clair Papers*, i., 139. It was at the beginning of the dreadful pseudo-classic cult in our intellectual history, and these honest soldiers and yeomen, with much self-complacency, gave to portions of their little raw town such ludicrously inappropriate names as the Campus Martius and Via Sacra.

Yet it must not be forgotten that the daring needed for the performance of this particular deed can in no way be compared with that shown by the real pioneers—the early explorers and Indian fighters. The very fact that the settlement around Marietta was national in its character, that it was the outcome of national legislation, and was undertaken under national protection, made the work of the individual settler count for less in the scale. The founders and managers of the Ohio

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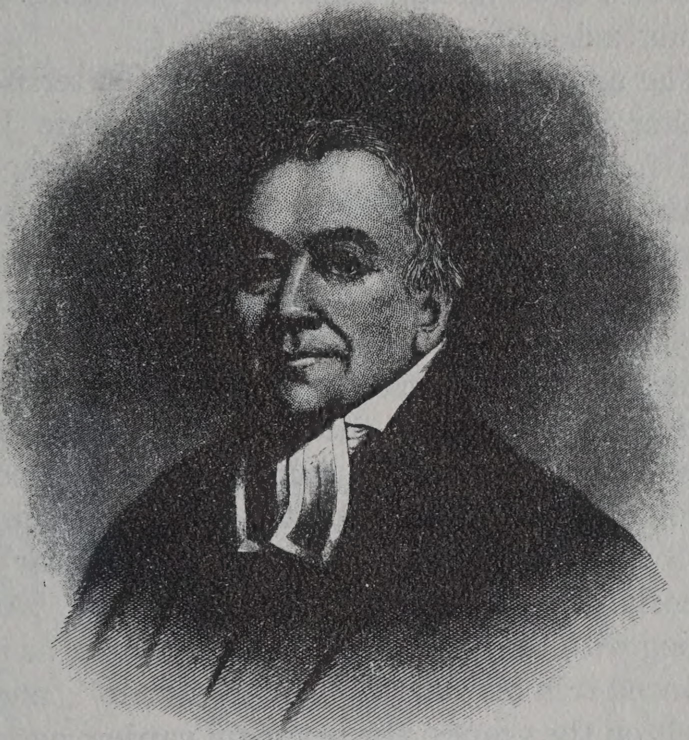
[1] Denny's "Military Journal," May 28 and June 15, 1789.

Company and the statesmen of the Federal Congress deserve much of the praise that in the Southwest would have fallen to the individual settlers only. The credit to be given to the nation in its collective capacity was greatly increased, and that due to the individual was correspondingly diminished.

Rufus Putnam and his fellow New Englanders built their new town under the guns of a Federal fort, only just beyond the existing boundary of settlement, and on land guaranteed them by the Federal Government. The dangers they ran and the hardships they suffered in no wise approached those undergone and overcome by the iron-willed, iron-limbed hunters who first built their lonely cabins on the Cumberland and Kentucky. The founders of Marietta trusted largely to the Federal troops for protection and were within easy reach of the settled country; but the wild wood-wanderers who first roamed through the fair lands south of the Ohio built their little towns in the heart of the wilderness, many scores of leagues from all assistance, and trusted solely to their own long rifles in time of trouble. The settler of 1788 journeyed at ease over paths worn smooth by the feet of many thousands of predecessors; but the early pioneers cut their own trails in the untrodden wilderness, and warred single-handed against wild nature and wild man.

In the summer of 1788, Dr. Manasseh Cutler visited the colony he had helped to found and kept a diary of his journey. His trip through Pennsylvania was marked merely by such incidents as were common at that time on every journey in the United States away from the larger towns. He travelled with various companions, stopping at taverns and private houses; and both guests and hosts were fond of trying their skill with the rifle, either at a mark or at squirrels. In mid-August he reached Coxe's fort, on the Ohio, and came for the first time to the frontier proper. Here he embarked on a big flat-boat, with on board forty-eight souls all told, besides cattle. They drifted and paddled down-stream, and on the evening of the second day reached the Muskingum. Here and there along the Virginian shore the boat passed settlements, with grain-fields and orchards; the houses were sometimes squalid cabins, and sometimes roomy, comfortable buildings. When he reached the newly built town, he was greeted by General Putnam, who invited Cutler to share the marquee in which he lived; and that afternoon he drank tea with another New England general, one of the original founders.

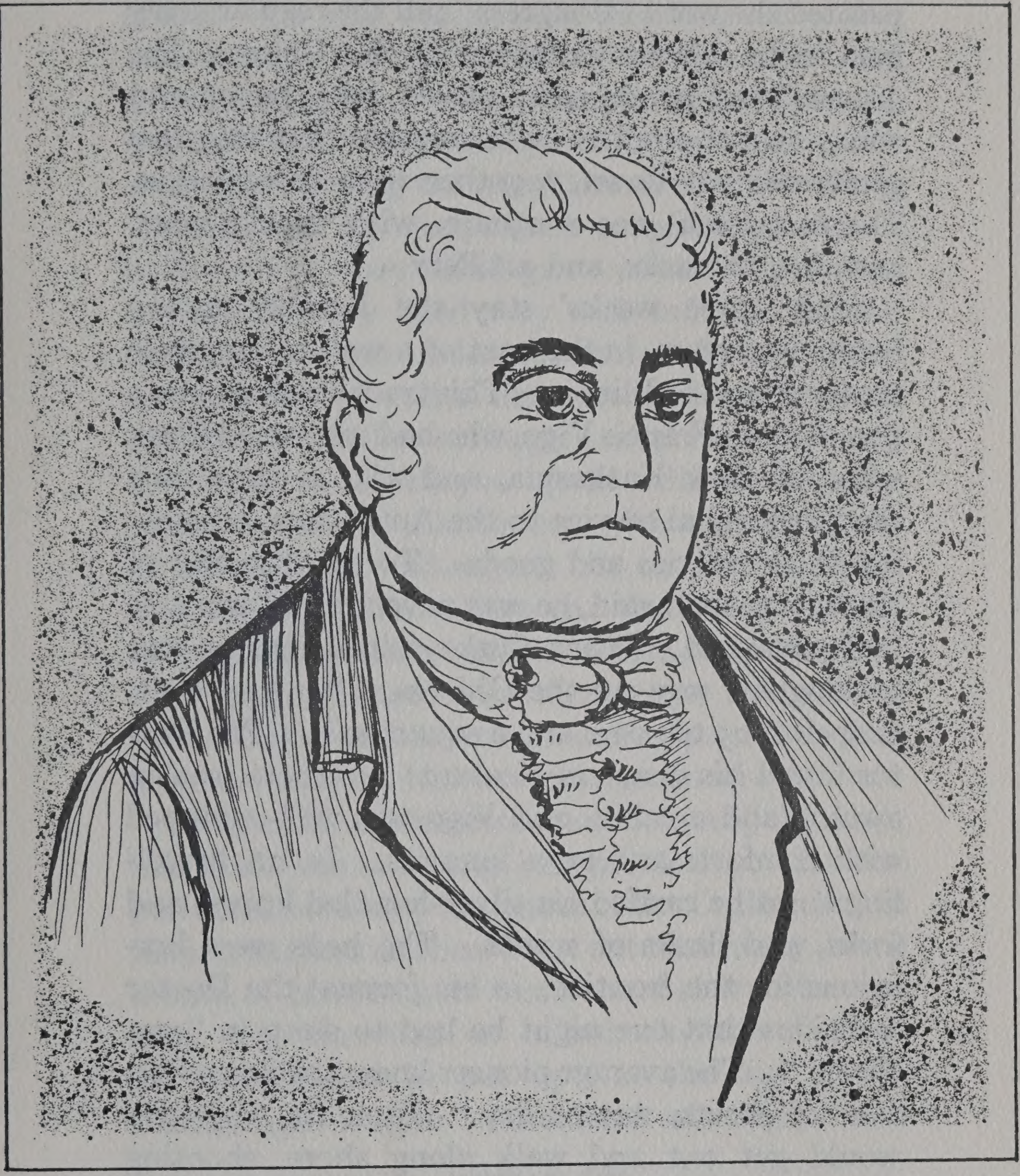
The next three weeks he passed very comfortably with his friends, taking part in the various social entertainments, walking through the woods, and visiting one or two camps of friendly Indians



Manasseh Cutler.

with all the curiosity of a pleasure-tourist. He greatly admired the large corn-fields, proof of the industry of the settlers. Some of the cabins were already comfortable; and many families of women and children had come out to join their husbands and fathers.

The newly appointed Governor of the territory, Arthur St. Clair, had reached the place in July, and formally assumed his task of government. Both Governor St. Clair and General Harmar were men of the old Federalist school, utterly unlike the ordinary borderers; and even in the wilderness they strove to keep a certain stateliness and formality in their surroundings. They speedily grew to feel at home with the New England leaders, who were gentlemen of much the same type as themselves, and had but little more in common with the ordinary frontier folk. Dr. Cutler frequently dined with one or other of them. After dining with the Governor at Fort Harmar, he pronounced it in his diary a "genteel dinner"; and he dwelt on the grapes, the beautiful garden, and the good looks of Mrs. Harmar. Sometimes the leading citizens gave a dinner to "His Excellency," as Dr. Cutler was careful to style the Governor, and to "General Harmar and his Lady." On such occasions the visitors were rowed from the fort to the town in a twelve-oared barge with an awning; the drilled crew rowed well, while a sergeant stood



Francis Vigo

in the stern to steer. On each oar blade was painted the word "Congress"; all the regular army men were devout believers in the Union. The dinners were handsomely served, with punch and wine; and at one Dr. Cutler records that fifty-five gentlemen sat down, together with three ladies. The fort itself was a square, with blockhouses, curtains, barracks, and artillery.

After three weeks' stay the Doctor started back, up-stream, in the boat of a well-to-do creole trader from the Illinois. This trader was no less a person than Francis Vigo, who had welcomed Clark when he took Kaskaskia, and who at that time rendered signal service to the Americans, advancing them peltries and goods. To the discredit of the nation be it said, he was never repaid what he had advanced. When Cutler joined him he was making his way up the Ohio in a big keel-boat, propelled by ten oars and a square-sail. The Doctor found his quarters pleasant; for there was an awning and a cabin, and Vigo was well-equipped with comforts and even luxuries. In his travelling chest he carried his silver-handled knives and forks, and flasks of spirits. The beds were luxurious for the frontier; in his journal the Doctor mentions that one night he had to sleep in "wet sheets." The average pioneer knew nothing whatever of sheets, wet or dry. Often the voyagers would get out and walk along shore, shooting pigeons or squirrels and plucking bunches of grapes. On such occasions, if they had time, they would light a fire and have "a good dish of tea and a french fricassee." Once they saw some Indians; but the latter were merely chasing a bear, which they killed, giving the travellers some of the meat.

Cutler and his companions caught huge catfish in the river; they killed game of all kinds in the forest, and they lived very well indeed. In the morning they got under way early, after a "bitter and a biscuit," and a little later breakfasted on cold meat, pickles, cabbage, and pork. Between eleven and twelve they stopped for dinner—usually of hot venison or wild turkey, with a strong "dish of coffee" and loaf-sugar. At supper they had cold meat and tea. Here and there on the shore they passed settlers' cabins, where they obtained corn and milk, and sometimes eggs, butter, and veal. Cutler landed at his starting-point less than a month after he had left it to go down-stream.[1]

Another Massachusetts man, Colonel John May, had made the same trip just previously. His experiences were very like those of Dr. Cutler; but in his journal he told them more entertainingly, being a man of considerable humor and sharp observation. He travelled on horseback from Boston. In Philadelphia he put up "at the sign of the Connastago Wagon"—the kind of wagon then used in the up-country, and afterwards for two generations the wheeled house with which the pioneers moved westward across plain and prairie. He halted for some days in the log-built town of Pittsburg, and, like many other travellers of the day, took a dislike to the place and to its inhabitants, who were largely Pennsylvania Germans. He mentions that he had reached it in thirty days from Boston, and had not lost a pound of his baggage, which had accompanied him in a wagon under the care of some of his hired men. At Pittsburg he was much struck by the beauty of the mountains and the river, and also by the numbers of flat-boats, loaded with immigrants, which were constantly drifting and rowing past on their way to Kentucky. From the time of reaching the river his journal is filled with comments on the extraordinary abundance and great size of the various kinds of food fishes.

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[1] Cutler, p. 420.

At last, late in May, he started in a crowded flat-boat down the Ohio, and was enchanted with the wild and beautiful scenery. He was equally pleased with the settlement at the mouth of the Muskingum; and he was speedily on good terms with the officers of the fort, who dined and wined him to his heart's content. There were rumors of savage warfare from below; but around Marietta the Indians were friendly. May and his people set to work to clear land and put up buildings; and they lived sumptuously, for game swarmed. The hunters supplied them with quantities of deer and wild turkeys, and occasionally elk and buffalo were also killed; while quantities of fish could be caught without effort, and the gardens and fields yielded plenty of vegetables. On July 4th, the members of the Ohio Company entertained the officers from Fort Harmar, and the ladies of the garrison, at an abundant dinner, and drank thirteen toasts,—to the United States, to Congress, to Washington, to the King of France, to the new Constitution, to the Society of the Cincinnati, and various others.

Colonel May built him a fine "mansion house," thirty-six feet by eighteen, and fifteen feet high, with a good cellar underneath, and in the windows panes of glass he had brought all the way from Boston. He continued to enjoy the life in all its phases, from hunting in the woods to watching the sun rise, and making friends with the robins, which, in the wilderness, always followed the settlements. In August, he went up the river, without adventure, and returned to his home.[1]

Such a trip as either of these was a mere holiday picnic. It offers as striking a contrast as well could be offered to the wild and lonely journeyings of the stark wilderness hunters and Indian fighters who first went west of the mountains. General Rufus Putnam and his associates did a deed, the consequences of which were of vital importance. They showed that they possessed the highest attributes of good citizenship—resolution and sagacity, stern morality, and the capacity to govern others as well as themselves. But they performed no pioneer feat of any note as such, and they were not called upon to display a tithe of the reckless daring and iron endurance of hardship which characterized the conquerors of the Illinois and the founders of Kentucky and Tennessee. This is in no sense a reflection upon them. They did not need to give proof of a courage they had shown time and again in bloody battles against the best troops of Europe. In this particular enterprise, in which they showed so many admirable qualities, they had little chance to show the quality of adventurous bravery. They drifted comfortably down-stream, from the log fort whence they started, past many settlers' houses, until they came to the post of a small Federal garrison, where they built their town. Such a trip is not to be mentioned in the same breath with the long wanderings of Clark and Boon and Robertson, when they went forth unassisted to subdue the savage and make tame the shaggy wilderness.

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[1] *Journal and Letters of Colonel John May*, one of the many valuable historical publications of Robert Clarke & Co., of Cincinnati.

St. Clair, the first governor, was a Scotchman of good family. He had been a patriotic but unsuccessful general in the Revolutionary army. He was a friend of Washington, and in politics a firm Federalist; he was devoted to the cause of Union and Liberty, and was a conscientious, high-minded man. But he had no aptitude for the incredibly difficult task of subduing the formidable forest Indians, with their peculiar and dangerous system of warfare; and he possessed no capacity for getting on with the frontiersmen, being without sympathy for their virtues while keenly alive to their very unattractive faults.

In the fall of 1787 another purchase of public lands was negotiated, by the Miami Company. The chief personage in this company was John Cleves Symmes, one of the first judges of the Northwestern Territory. Rights were acquired to take up one million acres, and under these rights three small settlements were made towards the close of the year 1788. One of them was chosen by St. Clair to be the seat of government. This little town had been called Losantiville in its first infancy, but St. Clair re-christened it Cincinnati, in honor of the Society of the officers of the Continental army.

The men who formed these Miami Company colonies came largely from the middle States. Like the New England founders of Marietta, very many of them, if not most, had served in the Continental army. They were good settlers; they made good material out of which to build up a great state. Their movement was modelled on that of Putnam and his associates. It was a triumph of collectivism rather than of individualism. The settlers were marshalled in a company, instead of moving freely by themselves, and they took a territory granted them by Congress, under certain conditions, and defended for them by the officers and troops of the regular army.

Civil government was speedily organized. St. Clair and the judges formed the first legislature; in theory they were only permitted to adopt laws already in existence in the old States, but as a matter of fact they tried any legislative experiments they saw fit. St. Clair was an autocrat, both by military training and by political principles. He was a man of rigid honor, and he guarded the interests of the territory with jealous integrity; but he exercised such a rigorous supervision over the acts of his subordinate colleagues, the judges, that he became involved in wrangles at the very beginning of his administration. To prevent the incoming of unauthorized intruders, he issued a proclamation summoning all newly arrived persons to report at once to the local commandants, and, with a view of keeping the game for the use of the actual settlers, and also to prevent as far as possible fresh irritation being given the Indians, he forbade all hunting in the territory, for hides or flesh save by the inhabitants proper.[1] Only an imperfect obedience was rendered either proclamation.

Thus the settlement of the Northwest was fairly begun, on a system hitherto untried. The fates and the careers of all the mighty States which yet lay formless in the forest were in great measure determined by what was at this time done. The nation had decreed that they should all have equal rights with the older States and with one another, and yet that they should remain forever inseparable from the Union; and above all, it had been settled that the bondman should be unknown within their borders. Their founding represented the triumph of the principle of collective national action over the spirit of intense individualism displayed so commonly on the frontier. The uncontrolled initiative of the individual, which was the chief force in the settlement of the Southwest, was given comparatively little play in the settlement of the Northwest. The Northwest owed its existence to the action of the nation as a whole.

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[1] Draper MSS.; William Clark Papers; Proclamation, Vincennes, June 28, 1790.

II

THE WAR IN THE NORTHWEST, 1787–1790

THE Federal troops were camped in the Federal territory north of the Ohio. They garrisoned the forts and patrolled between the little log towns. They were commanded by the Federal General, Harmar, and the territory was ruled by the Federal Governor, St. Clair. Thenceforth the national authorities and the regular troops played the chief parts in the struggle for the Northwest. The frontier militia became a mere adjunct—often necessary, but always untrustworthy—of the regular forces.

For some time the regulars fared ill in the warfare with the savages; and a succession of mortifying failures closed with a defeat more ruinous than any which had been experienced since the days of the "iron-tempered general with the pipe-clay brain,"—for the disaster which befell St. Clair was as overwhelming as that wherein Braddock met his death. The continued checks excited the anger of the eastern people, and the dismay and derision of the Westerners. They were keenly felt by the officers of the army; and they furnished an excuse for those who wished to jeer at regular troops, and exalt the militia. Jefferson, who never understood anything about warfare, being a timid man, and who belonged to the visionary school which always denounced the army and navy, was given a legitimate excuse to criticise the tactics of the regulars [1]; and of course he never sought occasion to comment on the even worse failings of the militia.

The truth was that the American military authorities fell into much the same series of errors as their predecessors, the British, untaught by the dreary and mortifying experience of the latter in fighting these forest foes. The War Department at Washington, and the Federal generals who first came to the Northwest, did not seem able to realize the formidable character of the Indian armies, and were certainly unable to teach their own troops how to fight them. Harmar and St. Clair were both fair officers, and in open country were able to acquit themselves respectably in the face of civilized foes. But they did not have the peculiar genius necessary to the successful Indian fighter, and they never learned how to carry on a campaign in the woods.

They had the justifiable distrust of the militia felt by all the officers of the Continental army.

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[1] Draper MSS.; G. R. Clark Papers; Jefferson to Innes, March 7, 1791.

In the long campaigns waged against Howe, Clinton, and Cornwallis they had learned the immense superiority of the Continental troops to the local militia. They knew that the Revolution would have failed had it not been for the Continental troops. They knew also, by the bitter experience common to all officers who had been through the war, that, though the militia might on occasion do well, yet they could never be trusted; they were certain to desert or grow sulky and mutinous if exposed to the fatigue and hardship of a long campaign, while in a pitched battle in the open they never fought as stubbornly as the regulars, and often would not fight at all.

All this was true; yet the officers of the regular army failed to understand that it did not imply the capacity of the regular troops to fight savages on their own ground. They showed little real comprehension of the extraordinary difficulty of such warfare against such foes, and of the reasons which made it so hazardous. They could not help assigning other causes than the real ones for every defeat and failure. They attributed each in turn to the effects of ambuscade or surprise, instead of realizing that in each the prime factor was the formidable fighting power of the individual Indian warrior, when in the thick forest which was to him a home, and when acting under that species of wilderness discipline which was so effective for a single crisis in his peculiar warfare. The Indian has rarely shown any marked excellence as a fighter in mass in the open; though of course there have been one or two brilliant exceptions. At times in our wars we have tried the experiment of drilling bodies of Indians as if they were whites, and using them in the ordinary way in battle. Under such conditions, as a rule, they have shown themselves inferior to the white troops against whom they were pitted. In the same way they failed to show themselves a match for the white hunters of the great plains when on equal terms. But their marvellous faculty for taking advantage of cover, and for fighting in concert when under cover, has always made the warlike tribes foes to be dreaded beyond all others when in the woods, or among wild broken mountains.

The history of our warfare with the Indians during the century following the close of the Revolution is marked by curiously sharp contrasts in the efficiency shown by the regular troops in campaigns carried on at different times and under varying conditions. These contrasts are due much more to the difference in the conditions under which the campaigns were waged than to the difference in the bodily prowess of the Indians. When we had been in existence as a nation for a century, the Modocs in their lava-beds and the Apaches amid their waterless mountains were still waging against the regulars of the day the same tedious and dangerous warfare waged against Harmar and St. Clair by the forest Indians. There were the same weary, long-continued campaigns; the same difficulty in bringing the savages to battle; the same blind fighting against hidden antagonists shielded by the peculiar nature of their fastnesses; and, finally, the same great disparity of loss against the white troops. During the intervening hundred years there had been many similar struggles; as, for instance, that against the Seminoles. Yet there had also been many struggles, against Indians naturally more formidable, in which the troops again and again worsted their Indian foes even when the odds in numbers were two or three to one against the whites. The difference between these different classes of wars was partly accounted for by change in weapons and methods of fighting; partly by the change in the character of the battle-grounds. The horse Indians of the plains were as elusive and difficult to bring to battle as the Indians of the mountains and forests; but in the actual fighting they had no chance to take advantage of cover in the way which rendered so formidable their brethren of the hills and the deep woods. In consequence, their occasional slaughtering victories, including the most famous of all, the battle of the Rosebud, in which Custer fell, took the form of the overwhelming of a comparatively small number of whites by immense masses of mounted horsemen. When their weapons were inferior, as on the first occasions when they were brought into contact with troops carrying breech-loading arms of precision, or when they tried the tactics of downright fighting, and of charging fairly in the open, they were often themselves beaten or repulsed with fearful slaughter by mere handfuls of whites. In the years 1867–68, all the horse Indians of the plains were at war with us, and many battles were fought with varying fortune. Two were especially noteworthy. In each a small body of troops and frontier scouts, under the command of a regular army officer who was also a veteran Indian fighter, beat back an overwhelming Indian force, which attempted to storm by open onslaught the position held by the white riflemen. In one instance fifty men, under Major George H. Forsyth, beat back nine hundred warriors, killing or wounding double their own number. In the other a still more remarkable defence was made by thirty-one men under Major James Powell against an even larger force, which charged again and again, and did not accept their repulse as final until they had lost three hundred of their foremost braves. For years the Sioux spoke with bated breath of this battle as the "medicine fight,"[1] the defeat so

[1] For all this, see Dodge's admirable *Our Wild Indians*.

overwhelming that it could be accounted for only by supernatural interference.

But no such victory was ever gained over mountain or forest Indians who had become accustomed to fighting the white men. Every officer who has ever faced these foes has had to spend years in learning his work, and has then been forced to see a bitterly inadequate reward for his labors. The officers of the regular army who served in the forests north of the Ohio just after the Revolution, had to undergo a strange and painful training; and were obliged to content themselves with scanty and hard-won triumphs even after this training had been undergone.

The officers took some time to learn their duties as Indian fighters, but the case was much worse with the rank and file who served under them. From the beginning of our history it often proved difficult to get the best type of native American to go into the regular army save in time of war with a powerful enemy, for the low rate of pay was not attractive, while the disciplined subordination of the soldiers to their officers seemed irksome to people with an exaggerated idea of individual freedom and no proper conception of the value of obedience. Very many of the regular soldiers have always been of foreign birth; and in 1787, on the Ohio, the percentage of Irish and Germans in the ranks was probably fully as large as it was on the great plains a century later.[1] They, as others, at that early date, were, to a great extent, drawn from the least desirable classes of the eastern seaboard.[2] Three or four years later an unfriendly observer wrote of St. Clair's soldiers that they were a wretched set of men, weak and feeble, many of them mere boys, while others were rotten with drink and debauchery. He remarked that men "purchased from the prisons, wheel-barrows, and brothels of the nation at foolishly low wages, would never do to fight Indians"; and that against such foes, who were terrible enemies in the woods, there was need of first-class, specially trained troops, instead of trying to use "a set of men who enlisted because they could no longer live unhung any other way." [3]

Doubtless this estimate, made under the sting of defeat, was too harsh; and it was even more applicable to the forced levies of militia than to the Federal soldiers; but the shortcomings of the regular troops were sufficiently serious to need no exaggeration. Their own officers were far from pleased with the recruits they got.

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[1] Denny's "Journal," *passim.*

[2] For fear of misunderstanding, I wish to add that at many periods the rank and file have been composed of excellent material; of recent years their character has steadily risen, and the stuff itself has always proved good when handled for a sufficient length of time by good commanders.

[3] Draper Collection. Letter of John Cleves Symmes to Elias Boudinot, January 12, 1792.

To the younger officers, with a taste for sport, the life beyond the Ohio was delightful. The climate was pleasant, the country beautiful, the water was clear as crystal, and game abounded. In hard weather the troops lived on salt beef; but at other times their daily rations were two pounds of turkey or venison, or a pound and a half of bear meat or buffalo beef. Yet this game was supplied by hired hunters, not by the soldiers themselves. One of the officers wrote that he had to keep his troops practising steadily at a target, for they were incompetent to meet an enemy with the musket; they could not kill in a week enough game to last them a day.[1] It was almost impossible to train such troops, in a limited number of months or years, so as to enable them to meet their forest foes on equal terms. The discipline to which they were accustomed was admirably fitted for warfare in the open; but it was not suited for warfare in the woods. They had to learn even the use of their firearms with painful labor. It was merely hopeless to try to teach them to fight Indian fashion, all scattering out for themselves, and each taking a tree-trunk, and trying to slay an individual enemy. They were too clumsy; they utterly lacked the wild-creature qualities proper to the men of the wilderness, the men who inherited wolf-cunning and panther-stealth from countless generations, who bought bare life itself only at the price of never-ceasing watchfulness, craft, and ferocity.

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[1] State Department MSS., No. 150; Doughty's letter, March 15, 1786; also, November 30, 1785.

The regulars were certainly not ideal troops with which to oppose such foes; but they were the best attainable at that time. They possessed traits which were lacking in even the best of the frontier militia; and most of the militia fell far short of the best. When properly trained, the regulars could be trusted to persevere through a campaign; whereas the militia were sure to disband if kept out for any length of time. Moreover, a regular army formed a weapon with a temper tried and known; whereas a militia force was the most brittle of swords which might give one true stroke, or might fly into splinters at the first slight blow. Regulars were the only troops who could be trusted to wear out their foes in a succession of weary and hard-fought campaigns.

The best backwoods fighters, however, such men as Kenton and Brady had in their scout companies, were much superior to the regulars, and were able to meet the Indians on at least equal terms. But there were only a very few such men; and they were too impatient of discipline to be embodied in an army. The bulk of the frontier militia consisted of men who were better riflemen than the regulars and often physically abler, but who were otherwise in every military sense inferior, possessing their defects, sometimes in an accentuated form, and not possessing their compensating virtues. Like the regulars, these militia fought the Indians at a terrible disadvantage. A defeat for either meant murderous slaughter; for whereas the trained Indian fighters fought or fled each for himself, the ordinary troops huddled together in a mass, an easy mark for their savage foes.

The task set the leaders of the army in the Northwest was one of extreme difficulty and danger. They had to overcome a foe trained through untold ages how to fight most effectively on the very battle-ground where the contest was to be waged. To the whites a march through the wilderness was fraught with incredible toil; whereas the Indians moved without baggage, and scattered and came together as they wished, so that it was impossible to bring them to battle against their will. All that could be done was to try to beat them when they chose to receive or deliver an attack. With ordinary militia it was hopeless to attempt to accomplish anything needing prolonged and sustained effort, and, as already said, the thoroughly trained Indian fighters who were able to beat the savages at their own game were too few in numbers, and too unaccustomed to control and restraint, to permit of their forming the main body of the army in an offensive campaign. There remained only the regulars; and the raw recruits had to undergo a long and special training, and be put under the command of a thoroughly capable leader, like old Mad Anthony Wayne, before they could be employed to advantage.

The feeling between the regular troops and the frontiersmen was often very bitter, and on several occasions violent brawls resulted. One such occurred at Limestone, where the brutal Indian fighter Wetzel lived. Wetzel had murdered a friendly Indian, and the soldiers bore him a grudge. When they were sent to arrest him the townspeople rallied to his support. Wetzel himself resisted, and was, very properly, roughly handled in consequence. The interference of the townspeople was vigorously repaid in kind; they soon gave up the attempt, and afterwards one or two of them were ill-treated or plundered by the soldiers. They made complaint to the civil authorities, and a court-martial was then ordered by the Federal commanders. This court-martial acquitted the soldiers. Wetzel soon afterwards made his escape, and the incident ended.[1]

By 1787, the Indian war had begun with all its old fury. The thickly settled districts were not much troubled, and the towns which, like Marietta in the following year, grew up under the shadow of a Federal fort were comparatively safe. But the frontier of Kentucky, and of Virginia proper along the Ohio, suffered severely. There was great scarcity of powder and lead, and even of guns, and there was difficulty in procuring provisions for those militia who consented to leave their work and turn out when summoned. The settlers were harried, and the surveyors feared to go out to their work on the range. There were the usual horrible incidents of Indian warfare. A glimpse of one of the innumerable dreadful tragedies is afforded by the statement of one party of scouts, who, in following the trail of an Indian war band, found at the crossing of the river "the small tracks of a number of children," prisoners from a raid made on the Monongahela settlements.[1]

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[1] Draper MSS. Harmar's letter to Henry Lee, September 27, 1789. Also depositions of McCurdy, Lawler, Caldwell, and others, and proceedings of court-martial. The depositions conflict.

The settlers in the harried territory sent urgent appeals for help to the Governor of Virginia and to Congress. In these appeals stress was laid upon the poverty of the frontiersmen, and their lack of ammunition. The writers pointed out that the men of the border should receive support, if only from motives of policy; for it was of great importance to the people in the thickly settled districts that the war should be kept on the frontier, and that the men who lived there should remain as a barrier against the Indians. If the latter broke through and got among the less hardy and warlike people of the interior, they would work much greater havoc; for in Indian warfare the borderers were as much superior to the more peaceful people behind them as a veteran to a raw recruit.[1]

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[1] State Department MSS., No. 71, vol. ii. Letters of David Shepherd to Governor Randolph, April 30 and May 24, 1787.

These appeals did not go unheeded; but there was embarrassment in affording the frontier adequate protection, both because the party to which the borderers themselves belonged foolishly objected to the employment of a fair-sized regular army, and because Congress still clung to the belief that war could be averted by treaty, and so forbade the taking of proper offensive measures. In the years 1787, '88, and '89 the ravages continued; many settlers were slain, with their families, and many bodies of immigrants destroyed; while the scouting and rescue parties of whites killed a few Indians in return.[2] All the Indians were not yet at war, however; and curious agreements were entered into by individuals on both sides. In the absence on either side of any government with full authority and power, the leaders would often negotiate some special or temporary truce, referring only to certain limited localities, or to certain people; and would agree between themselves for the interchange or ransom of prisoners. There is a letter of Boon's extant in which he notifies a leading Kentucky colonel that a certain captive woman must be given up, in accordance with an agreement he has made with one of the noted Indian chiefs; and he insists upon the immediate surrender of the woman, to clear his "promise and obligation." [1]

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[1] Draper MSS. Lieutenant Marshall to Franklin, November 6, 1787.

[2] *Virginia State Papers*, iv., 357.

The Indians watched the Ohio with especial care, and took their toll from the immense numbers of immigrants who went down it. After passing the Muskingum no boat was safe. If the war-parties, lurking along the banks, came on a boat moored to the shore, or swept thither by wind or current, the crew was at their mercy; and, grown bold by success, they sometimes launched small flotillas of canoes and attacked the scows on the water. In such attacks they were often successful, for they always made the assault with the odds in their favor; though they were sometimes beaten back with heavy loss.

When the war was at its height the boats going down the Ohio preferred to move in brigades. An army officer has left a description [2] of one such flotilla, over which he had assumed command. It contained sixteen flat-boats, then usually called "Kentuck boats," and two keels. The flat-boats were lashed three together, and kept in one line. The women, children, and cattle were put in the middle scows, while the outside were manned and worked by the men. The keel-boats kept on either flank. This particular flotilla was unmolested by the Indians, but was almost wrecked in a furious storm of wind and rain.

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[1] Draper MSS., Boon Papers. Boon to Robert Patterson, March 16, 1787.

[2] Denny's "Military Journal," April 19, 1790.

The Federal authorities were still hopelessly endeavoring to come to some understanding with the Indians; they were holding treaties with some of the tribes, sending addresses and making speeches to others, and keeping envoys in the neighborhood of Detroit. These envoys watched the Indians who were there, and tried to influence the great gatherings of different tribes who came together at Sandusky to consult as to the white advance.[1]

These efforts to negotiate were as disheartening as was usually the case under such circumstances. There were many different tribes, and some were for peace, while others were for war; and even the peaceful ones could not restrain their turbulent young men. Far-off nations of Indians who had never been harmed by the whites, and were in no danger from them, sent war-parties to the Ohio; and the friendly tribes let them pass without interference. The Iroquois were eagerly consulted by the western Indians, and in the summer of 1788 a great party of them came to Sandusky to meet in council all the tribes of the Lakes and the Ohio valley, and even some from the upper Mississippi. With the Iroquois came the famous chief Joseph Brant, a mighty warrior, and a man of education, who, in his letters to the United States officials, showed much polished diplomacy.[1]

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[1] State Department MSS., No. 150, vol. iii.; Harmar's speech to the Indians at Vincennes, September 17, 1787; Richard Butler to the Secretary of War, May 4, 1788; etc.

The tribes who gathered at this great council met on the soil which, by treaty with England, had been declared American, and came from regions which the same treaty had defined as lying within the boundaries of the United States. But these provisions of the treaty had never been executed, owing largely to a failure on the part of the Americans themselves to execute certain other provisions. The land was really as much British as ever, and was so treated by the British Governor of Canada, Lord Dorchester, who had just made a tour of the lake posts. The tribes were feudatory to the British, and in their talks spoke of the King of Great Britain as "father," and Brant was a British pensioner. British agents were in constant communication with the Indians at the councils, and they distributed gifts among them with a hitherto unheard-of lavishness. In every way they showed their resolution to remain in full touch with their red allies.[1]

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[1] State Department MSS. No. 150 vol. iii., pp. 47 and 51.

Nevertheless, they were anxious that peace should be made. The Wyandots, too, seconded them, and addressed the Wabash Indians at one of the councils, urging them to cease their outrages on the Americans.[2] These Wyandots had long been converted, and in addressing their heathen brethren, said proudly: "We are not as other nations are—we, the Wyandots—we are Christians." They certainly showed themselves the better for their religion, and they were still the bravest of the brave. But though the Wabash Indians in answering spake them fair, they had no wish to go to peace; and the Wyandots were the only tribes who strove earnestly to prevent war. The American agents who had gone to the Detroit River were forced to report that there was little hope of putting an end to hostilities.[3] The councils accomplished nothing towards averting a war; on the contrary, they tended to band all the northwestern Indians together in a loose confederacy, so that active hostilities against some were sure in the end to involve all.

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[1] State Department MSS., St. Clair to Knox, September 14, 1788; St. Clair to Jay, December 13, 1788.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 267, Detroit River's Mouth, July 23, 1788.

[3] *Ibid.*, James Rinkin to Richard Butler, July 20, 1788.

While the councils were sitting and while the Americans were preparing for the treaties, outrages of the most flagrant kind occurred. One, out of many, was noteworthy as showing both the treachery of the Indians, and the further fact that some tribes went to war, not because they had been in any way maltreated, but from mere lust of blood and plunder. In July of this year, 1788, Governor St. Clair was making ready for a treaty to which he had invited some of the tribes. It was to be held on the Muskingum, and he sent to the appointed place provisions for the Indians with a guard of men. One day a party of Indians, whose tribe was then unknown, though later they turned out to be Chippewas from the upper lakes, suddenly fell on the guard. They charged home with great spirit, using their sharp spears well, and killed, wounded, or captured several soldiers; but they were repulsed, and retreated, carrying with them their dead, save one warrior.[1] A few days afterwards they imprudently ventured back, pretending innocence, and six were seized, and sent to one of the forts as prisoners. Their act of treacherous violence had, of course, caused the immediate abandonment of the proposed treaty.

The remaining Chippewas marched towards home, with the scalps of the men they had slain, and with one captured soldier. They passed by

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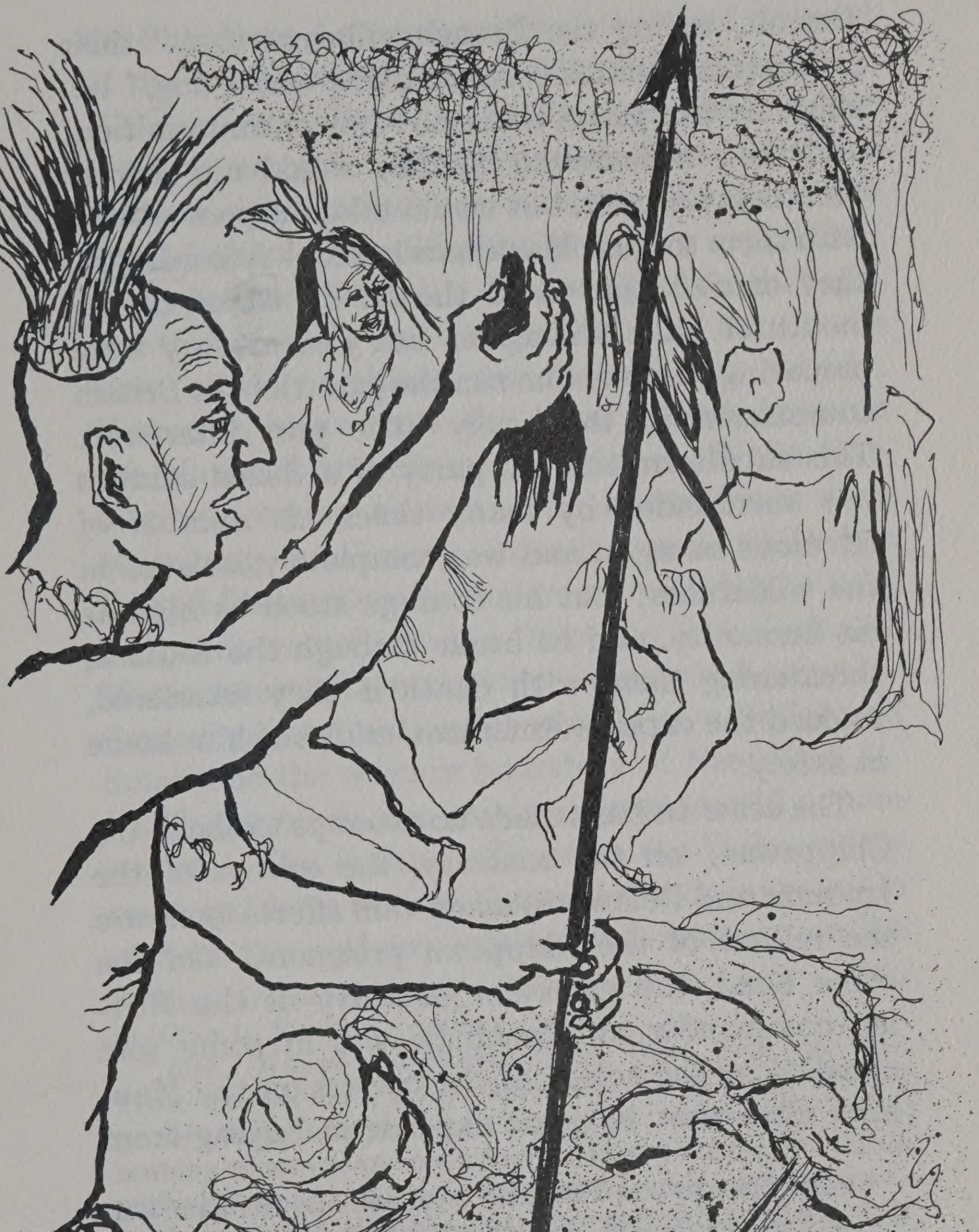
[1] *St. Clair Papers*, ii., 50.



A party of Indians . . . suddenly fell on the guard.

Detroit, telling the French villagers that "their father [the British commandant] was a dog," because he had given them no arms or ammunition, and that in consequence they would not deliver him their prisoner, but would take the poor wretch with them to their Mackinaw home. Accordingly, they carried him on to the far-off island at the mouth of Lake Michigan; but just as they were preparing to make him run the gauntlet the British commander of the lonely little post interfered. This subaltern with his party of a dozen soldiers was surrounded by many times his number of ferocious savages, and was completely isolated in the wilderness; but his courage stood as high as his humanity, and he broke through the Indians, threatening them with death if they interfered, rescued the captive American, and sent him home in safety.[1]

The other Indians made no attempt to check the Chippewas; on the contrary, the envoys of the Iroquois and Delawares made vain efforts to secure the release of the Chippewa prisoners. On the other hand, the generous gallantry of the British commander at Mackinaw was in some sort equalled by the action of the traders on the Maumee, who went to great expense in buying from the Shawnees Americans whom they had doomed to the terrible torture of death at the stake.[1]

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[1] State Department MSS., No. 150, vol. iii. William Wilson and James Rinkin to Richard Butler, August 4, 1788; Wilson and Rinkin to St. Clair, August 31, 1788.

Under such circumstances the treaties of course came to naught. After interminable delays the Indians either refused to treat at all, or else the acts of those who did were promptly repudiated by those who did not. In consequence, throughout this period even the treaties that were made were quite worthless, for they bound nobody. Moreover, there were the usual clashes between the National and State authorities. While Harmar was trying to treat, the Kentuckians were organizing retaliatory inroads; and while the United States Commissioners were trying to hold big peace councils on the Ohio, the New York and Massachusetts Commissioners were conducting independent negotiations at what is now Buffalo, to determine the western boundary of New York.[2]

All the while the ravages grew steadily more severe. The Federal officers at the little, widely scattered forts were at their wits' ends in trying to protect the outlying settlers and retaliate on the

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[1] State Department MSS., Rinkin to Butler, July, 2, 1788; St. Clair to Knox, September 4, 1788.

[2] *Ibid.*, Wilson and Rinkin to St. Clair, July 29, 1788. These treaties made at the Ohio forts are quite unworthy of preservation, save for mere curiosity; they really settled nothing whatever and conferred no rights that were not taken with the strong hand; yet they are solemnly quoted in some books as if they were the real sources of title to parts of the Northwest.

Indians; and as the latter grew bolder they menaced the forts themselves and harried the troops who convoyed provisions to them. Of the innumerable tragedies which occurred, the record of a few has by chance been preserved. One may be worth giving, merely as a sample of many others. On the Virginian side of the Ohio lived a pioneer farmer of some note, named Van Swearingen.[1] One day his son crossed the river to hunt with a party of strangers. Near a "waste cabbin," the deserted log-hut of some reckless adventurer, an Indian war band came on them unawares, slew three, and carried off the young man. His father did not know whether they had killed him or not. He could find no trace of him, and he wrote to the commander of the nearest fort, begging him to try to get news from the Indian villages as to whether his son were alive or dead, and to employ for the purpose any friendly Indian or white scout, at whatever price was set—he would pay it "to the utmost farthing." He could give no clue to the Indians who had done the deed; all he could say was that a few days before, one of these war-parties, while driving off a number of horses, was overtaken by the riflemen of the neighborhood and scattered, after a fight in which one white man and two red men were killed.

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[1] State Department MSS., No. 150, vol. ii., Van Swearingen to William Butler, Washington County, September 29, 1787.

The old frontiersman never found his son; doubtless the boy was slain; but his fate, like the fate of hundreds of others, was swallowed up in the gloomy mystery of the wilderness. So far from being unusual, the incident attracted no comment, for it was one of every-day occurrence. Its only interest lies in the fact that it was of a kind that befell the family of almost every dweller in the wilds. Danger and death were so common that the particular expression which each might take made small impress on the minds of the old pioneers. Every one of them had a long score of slain friends and kinsfolk to avenge upon his savage foes.

The subalterns in command of the little detachments which moved between the posts, whether they went by land or water, were forced to be ever on the watch against surprise and ambush. This was particularly the case with the garrison at Vincennes. The Wabash Indians were all the time out in parties to murder and plunder; and yet these same thieves and murderers were continually coming into town and strolling innocently about the fort; for it was impossible to tell the peaceful Indians from the hostile. They were ever in communication with the equally treacherous and ferocious Miami tribes, to whose towns the war-parties often brought five or six scalps in a day, and prisoners, too, doomed to a death of awful torture at the stake. There is no need to waste sympathy on the northwestern Indians for their final fate; never were defeat and subjection more richly deserved.

The bands of fierce and crafty braves who lounged about the wooden fort at Vincennes watched eagerly the outgoing and incoming of the troops, and were prompt to dog and waylay any party they thought they could overcome. They took advantage of the unwillingness of the Federal commander to harass Indians who might be friendly; and plotted at ease the destruction of the very troops who spent much of the time in keeping intruders off their lands. In the summer of 1788 they twice followed parties of soldiers from the town when they went down the Wabash, and attacked them by surprise, from the river banks, as they sat in their boats. In one instance, the lieutenant in command got off with the loss of but two or three men. In the other, of the thirty-six soldiers who composed the party ten were killed, eight wounded, and the greater part of the provisions and goods they were conveying were captured; while the survivors, pushing down-stream, ultimately made their way to the Illinois towns.[1] This last tragedy was avenged by a band of thirty mounted riflemen from Kentucky, led by the noted backwoods fighter Hardin. They had crossed the Ohio on a retaliatory foray, many of their horses having been stolen by the Indians. When near Vincennes they happened to stumble on the war-party that had attacked the soldiers; they slew ten and scattered the others to the winds, capturing thirty horses.[1]

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[1] State Department MSS., No. 150, vol. iii. Lieutenant Spear to Harmar, June 2, 1788; Hamtranck to Harmar, August 12, 1788.

The war bands who harried the settlements, or lurked along the banks of the Ohio, bent on theft and murder, did terrible deeds, and at times suffered terrible fates in return, when some untoward chance threw them in the way of the grim border vengeance. The books of the old annalists are filled with tales of disaster and retribution, of horrible suffering and of fierce prowess. Countless stories are told of heroic fight and panic-rout; of midnight assault on lonely cabins, and ambush of heavy-laden immigrant scows; of the deaths of brave men and cowards, and the dreadful butchery of women and children; of bloody raid and revengeful counter-stroke. Sometimes a band of painted marauders would kill family after family without suffering any loss, would capture boat after boat without effective resistance from the immigrants, paralyzed by panic-fright, and would finally escape unmolested, or beat off with ease a possibly larger party of pursuers who happened to be ill led, or to be men with little training in wilderness warfare.

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[1] Draper MSS. William Clark Papers. N. T. Dalton to W. Clark, Vincennes, August 23, 1788; also Denny, p. 528.

At other times all this might be reversed. A cabin might be defended with such maddened courage by some stout rifleman, fighting for his cowering wife and children, that a score of savages would recoil, baffled, leaving many of their number dead. A boat's crew of resolute men might beat back, with heavy loss, an over-eager onslaught of Indians in canoes, or push their slow, unwieldy craft from shore under a rain of rifle-balls, while the wounded oarsmen strained at the bloody handles of the sweeps, and the men who did not row gave shot for shot, firing at the flame-tongues in the dark woods. A party of scouts, true wilderness veterans, equal to their foes in woodcraft and cunning, and superior in markmanship and reckless courage, might follow and scatter some war band and return in triumph with scalps and retaken captives and horses.

A volume could readily be filled with adventures of this kind, all varying infinitely in detail, but all alike in their bloody ferocity. During the years 1789 and 1790 scores of Indian war-parties went on such trips, to meet every kind of success and failure. The deeds of one such, which happen to be recorded, may be given merely to serve as a sample of what happened in countless other cases.

In the early spring of 1790 a band of fifty-four Indians of various tribes, but chiefly Cherokees and Shawnees, established a camp near the mouth of the Scioto.[1] They first attacked a small, new-built station, on one of the bottoms of the Ohio, some twenty miles from Limestone, and killed or captured all its fifteen inhabitants. They spared the lives of two of the captives, but forced the wretches to act as decoys so as to try to lure passing boats within reach.

Their first success was with a boat going down-river, and containing four men and two unmarried girls, besides a quantity of goods intended for the stores in the Kentucky towns. The two decoys appeared on the right bank, begging piteously to be taken on board, and stating that they had just escaped from the savages. Three of the voyagers, not liking the looks of the men, refused to land, but the fourth, a reckless fellow named Flynn, and the two girls, who were coarse, foolish, good-natured frontier women of the lower sort, took pity upon the seeming fugitives, and insisted on taking them aboard. Accordingly, the scow was shoved in-shore, and Flynn jumped on the bank, only to be immediately seized by the Indians, who then opened fire on the others. They tried to put off and fired back, but were helpless; one man and a girl were shot, another wounded, and the savages then swarmed aboard, seized everything, and got very drunk on a keg of whisky. The fates of the captives were various, each falling to some different group of savages. Flynn, the cause of the trouble, fell to the Cherokees, who took him to the Miami town, and burned him alive, with dreadful torments. The remaining girl, after suffering outrage and hardship, was bound to the stake, but saved by a merciful Indian, who sent her home. Of the two remaining men, one ran the gauntlet successfully, and afterwards escaped and reached home through the woods, while the other was ransomed by a French trader at Sandusky.

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[1] *American State Papers*, Indian Affairs, vol. i., pp. 87, 88, 91.

Before thus disposing of their captives, the Indians hung about the mouth of the Scioto for some time. They captured a pirogue going up-stream, and killed all six paddlers. Soon afterwards three heavily laden scows passed, drifting down with the current. Aboard these were twenty-eight men, with their women and children, together with many horses and bales of merchandise. They had but sixteen guns among them, and many were immigrants, unaccustomed to savage warfare, and therefore they made no effort to repel the attack, which could easily have been done by resolute, well-armed veterans. The Indians crowded into the craft they had captured, and paddled and rowed after the scows, whooping and firing. They nearly overtook the last scow, whereupon its people shifted to the second, and abandoned it. When further pressed the people shifted into the headmost scow, cut holes in its sides so as to work all the oars, and escaped down-stream, leaving the Indians to plunder the two abandoned boats, which contained twenty-eight horses and fifteen hundred pounds' worth of goods.

The Kentuckians of the neighborhood sent word to General Harmar, begging him to break up this nest of plunderers. Accordingly, he started after them, with his regular troops. He was joined by a number of Kentucky mounted riflemen, under the command of Colonel Charles Scott, a rough Indian fighter and veteran of the Revolutionary War, who afterwards became governor of the State. Scott had moved to Kentucky not long after the close of the war with England; he had lost a son at the hands of the savages,[1] and he delighted in war against them.

Harmar made a circuit and came down along the Scioto, hoping to surprise the Indian camp; but he might as well have hoped to surprise a party of timber wolves. His foes scattered and disappeared in the dense forest. Nevertheless, coming across some moccasin tracks, Scott's horsemen followed the trail, killed four Indians, and carried in the scalps to Limestone. The chastisement proved of little avail. A month later five immigrant boats, while moored to the bank a few miles from Limestone, were rushed by the Indians at night; one boat was taken, all the thirteen souls aboard being killed or captured.

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[1] State Department MSS., No. 71, vol. ii., p. 563.

Among the men who suffered about this time was the Italian Vigo; a fine, manly, generous fellow, of whom St. Clair spoke as having put the United States under heavy obligations, and as being "in truth the most disinterested person" he had ever known.[1] While taking his trading boat up the Wabash, Vigo was attacked by an Indian war-party, three of his men were killed, and he was forced to drop down-stream. Meeting another trading boat manned by Americans, he again essayed to force a passage in company with it, but they were both attacked with fury. The other boat got off; but Vigo's was captured. However, the Indians, when they found the crew consisted of creoles, molested none of them, telling them that they only warred against the Americans; though they plundered the boat.

By the summer of 1790 the raids of the Indians had become unbearable. Fresh robberies and murders were committed every day in Kentucky, or along the Wabash and Ohio. Writing to the

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[1] *American State Papers*, Indian Affairs, vol. i., September 19, 1790.

Secretary of War, a prominent Kentuckian, well knowing all the facts, estimated that during the seven years which had elapsed since the close of the Revolutionary War the Indians had slain fifteen hundred people in Kentucky itself, or on the immigrant routes leading thither, and had stolen twenty thousand horses, besides destroying immense quantities of other property.[1] The Federal generals were also urgent in asserting the folly of carrying on a merely defensive war against such foes. All the efforts of the Federal authorities to make treaties with the Indians and persuade them to be peaceful had failed. The Indians themselves had renewed hostilities, and the different tribes had one by one joined in the war, behaving with a treachery only equalled by their ferocity. With great reluctance, the National Government concluded that an effort to chastise the hostile savages could no longer be delayed; and those on the Maumee, or Miami of the Lakes, and on the Wabash, whose guilt had been peculiarly heinous, were singled out as the objects of attack.

The expedition against the Wabash towns was led by the Federal commander at Vincennes, Major Hamtranck. No resistance was encountered; and after burning a few villages of bark huts and destroying some corn he returned to Vincennes.

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[1] *American State Papers*, Indian Affairs, vol. i. Innes to Secretary of War, July 7, 1790.

The main expedition was that against the Miami Indians, and was led by General Harmar himself. It was arranged that there should be a nucleus of regular troops, but that the force should consist mainly of militia from Kentucky and Pennsylvania, the former furnishing twice as many as the latter. The troops were to gather on the 15th of September at Fort Washington, on the north bank of the Ohio, a day's journey downstream from Limestone.

At the appointed time the militia began to straggle in; the regular officers had long been busy getting their own troops, artillery, and military stores in readiness. The regulars felt the utmost disappointment at the appearance of the militia. They numbered but few of the trained Indian fighters of the frontier; many of them were hired substitutes; most of them were entirely unacquainted with Indian warfare, and were new to the life of the wilderness; and they were badly armed.[1] The Pennsylvanians were of even poorer stuff than the Kentuckians, numbering many infirm old men and many mere boys. They were undisciplined, with little regard for authority, and inclined to be disorderly and mutinous.

By the end of September one battalion of Pennsylvania, and three battalions of Kentucky, militia, had arrived, and the troops began their march to the Miami. All told, there were 1453 men, 320 being Federal troops and 1133 militia, many of whom were mounted; and there were three light brass field-pieces.[1] In point of numbers the force was amply sufficient for its work; but Harmar, though a gallant man, was not fitted to command even a small army against Indians, and the bulk of the militia, who composed nearly four fifths of his force, were worthless. A difficulty immediately occurred in choosing a commander for the militia. Undoubtedly the best one among their officers was Colonel John Hardin, who (like his fellow-Kentuckian, Colonel Scott) was a veteran of the Revolutionary War, and a man of experience in the innumerable deadly Indian skirmishes of the time. He had no special qualifications for the command of more than a handful of troops, but he was a brave and honorable man, who had done well in leading small parties of rangers against their red foes. Nevertheless, the militia threatened mutiny unless they were allowed to choose their own leader, and they chose a mere incompetent, a Colonel Trotter. Harmar yielded, for the home authorities had dwelt much on the necessity of his preventing friction between the regulars and the militia; and he had so little control over the latter, that he was very anxious to keep them good-humored. Moreover, the commissariat arrangements were poor. Under such circumstances, the keenest observers on the frontier foretold failure from the start.[1]

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[1] *American State Papers*, Indian Affairs, vol. i., pp. 104, 105; Military Affairs, i., 20.

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[1] *American State Papers*, Indian Affairs, i., p. 104; also p. 105. For this expedition, see also *Military Affairs*, i., pp. 20, 28, and Denny's "Military Journal," pp. 343, 354.

For several days the army marched slowly forward. The regular officers had endless difficulty with the pack-horsemen, who allowed their charges to stray or be stolen, and they strove to instruct the militia in the rudiments of their duties, on the march, in camp, and in battle. A fortnight's halting progress through the wilderness brought the army to a small branch of the Miami of the Lakes. Here a horse patrol captured a Maumee Indian, who informed his captors that the Indians knew of their approach and were leaving their towns. On hearing this an effort was made to hurry forward; but when the army reached the Miami towns, on October 17th, they had been deserted. They stood at the junction of two branches of the Miami, the St. Mary and the St. Joseph, about 170 miles from Fort Washington. The troops had marched about ten miles a day. The towns consisted of a couple of hundred wigwams, with some good log-huts; and there were gardens, orchards, and immense fields of corn.

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[1] *American State Papers*, Indian Affairs, i. Jno. O'Fallan to the President, Lexington, Ky., September 25, 1790.

All these the soldiers destroyed, and the militia loaded themselves with plunder.

On the 18th, Colonel Trotter was ordered out with three hundred men to spend a couple of days exploring the country, and finding out where the Indians were. After marching a few miles they came across two Indians. Both were killed by the advanced horsemen. All four of the field-officers of the militia—two colonels and two majors—joined helter-skelter in the chase, leaving their troops for half an hour without a leader. Apparently satisfied with this feat, Trotter marched home, having accomplished nothing.

Much angered, Harmar gave the command to Hardin, who left the camp next morning with two hundred men, including thirty regulars. But the militia had turned sulky. They did not wish to go and they began to desert and return to camp immediately after leaving it. At least half of them had thus left him, when he stumbled on a body of about a hundred Indians. The Indians advanced firing, and the militia fled with abject cowardice, many not even discharging their guns. The thirty regulars stood to their work, and about ten of the militia stayed with them. This small detachment fought bravely, and was cut to pieces, but six or seven men escaping. Their captain, after valiant fighting, broke through the savages, and got into a swamp nearby. Here he hid, and returned to camp next day; he was so near the place of the fight that he had seen the victory-dance of the Indians over their slain and mutilated foes.

This defeat took the heart out of the militia. The army left the Miami towns, and moved back a couple of miles to the Shawnee town of Chillicothe. A few Indians began to lurk about, stealing horses, and two of the militia captains determined to try to kill one of the thieves. Accordingly, at nightfall they hobbled a horse with a bell near a hazel thicket, in which they hid. Soon an Indian stalked up to the horse, whereupon they killed him, and brought his head into camp, proclaiming that it should at least be worth the price of a wolf-scalp.

Next day was spent by the army in completing the destruction of all the corn, the huts, and the belongings of the Indians. A band of a dozen warriors tried to harass one of the burning parties; but some of the mounted troops got on their flank, killed two and drove the others off, they themselves suffering no loss.

The following day, the 21st, the army took up the line of march for Fort Washington, having destroyed six Indian towns, and an immense quantity of corn. But Hardin was very anxious to redeem himself by trying another stroke at the Indians, who, he rightly judged, would gather at their towns as soon as the troops left.

Harmar also wished to revenge his losses, and to forestall any attempt of the Indians to harass his shaken and retreating forces. Accordingly, that night he sent back against the towns a detachment of four hundred men, sixty of whom were regulars, and the rest picked militia. They were commanded by Major Wyllys, of the regulars. It was a capital mistake of Harmar's to send off a mere detachment on such a business. He should have taken a force composed of all his regulars and the best of the militia, and led it in person.

The detachment marched soon after midnight, and reached the Miami at daybreak on October 22d. It was divided into three columns, which marched a few hundred yards apart, and were supposed to keep in touch with one another. The middle column was led by Wyllys in person, and included the regulars and a few militia. The rest of the militia composed the flank columns and marched under their own officers.

Immediately after crossing the Miami and reaching the neighborhood of the town, Indians were seen. The columns were out of touch, and both of those on the flanks pressed forward against small parties of braves, whom they drove before them up the St. Joseph. Heedless of the orders they had received, the militia thus pressed forward, killing and scattering the small parties in their front and losing all connection with the middle column of regulars. Meanwhile the main body of the Indians gathered to assail this column, and overwhelmed it by numbers; whether they had led the militia away by accident or by design is not known. The regulars fought well and died hard, but they were completely cut off, and most of them, including their commander, were slain. A few escaped, and either fled back to camp or up the St. Joseph. Those who took the latter course met the militia returning and informed them of what had happened. Soon afterwards the victorious Indians themselves appeared, on the opposite side of the St. Joseph, and attempted to force their way across. But the militia were flushed by the easy triumph of the morning and fought well, repulsing the Indians, and finally forcing them to withdraw. They then marched slowly back to the Miami towns, gathered their wounded, arrayed their ranks, and rejoined the main army. The Indians had suffered heavily, and were too dispirited, both by their loss and by their last repulse, to attempt further to harass either this detachment or the main army itself on its retreat.

Nevertheless, the net result was a mortifying failure. In all, the regulars had lost 75 men killed and 3 wounded, while of the militia 28 had been wounded and 108 had been killed or were missing. The march back was very dreary; and the militia became nearly ungovernable, so that at one time

Harmar reduced them to order only by threatening to fire on them with the artillery.

The loss of all their provisions and dwellings exposed the Miami tribes to severe suffering and want during the following winter; and they had also lost many of their warriors. But the blow was only severe enough to anger and unite them, not to cripple or crush them. All the other western tribes made common cause with them. They banded together and warred openly; and their vengeful forays on the frontier increased in number, so that the suffering of the settlers was great. Along the Ohio people lived in hourly dread of tomahawk and scalping-knife; the attacks fell unceasingly on all the settlements, from Marietta to Louisville.